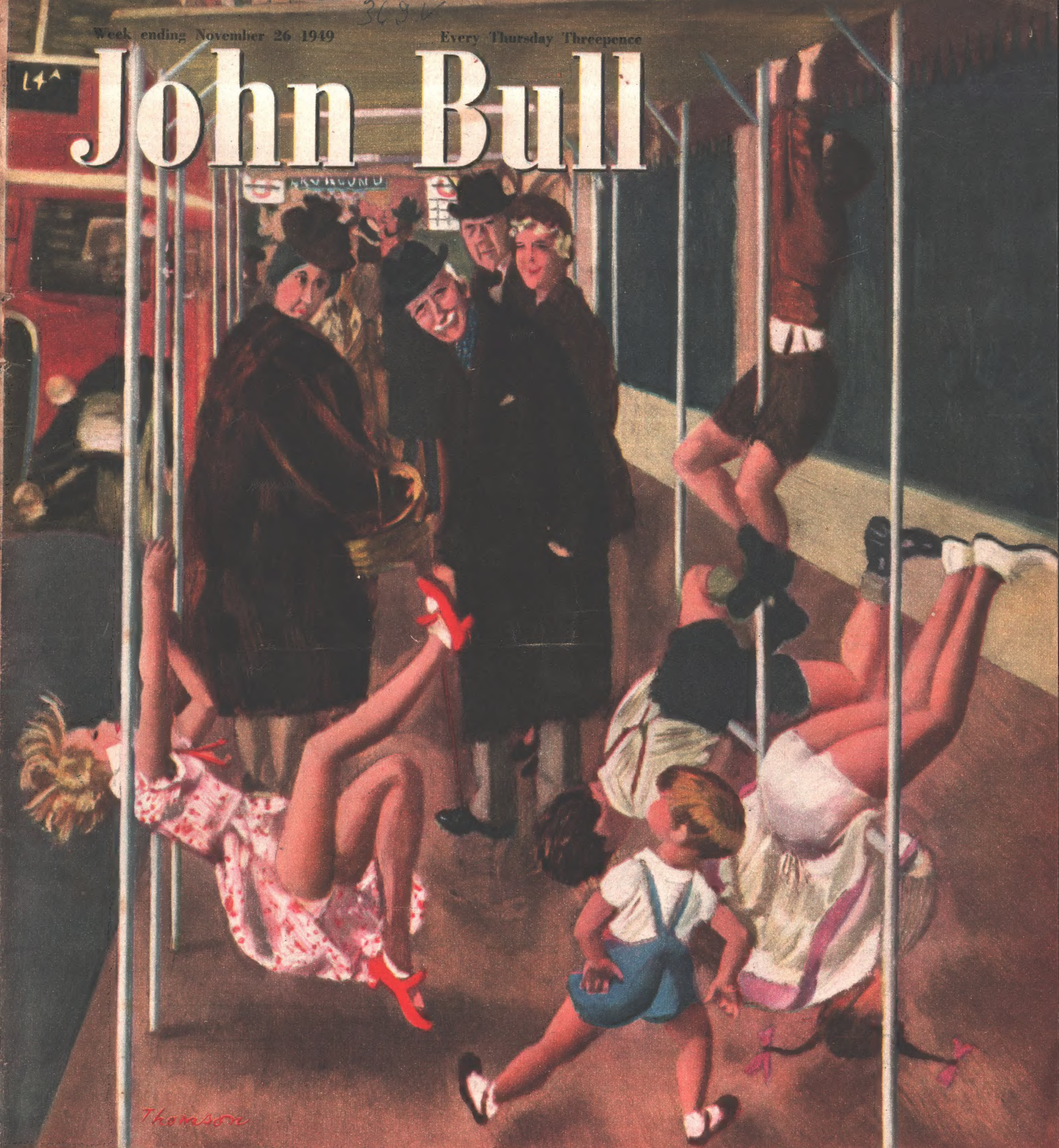
Week ending November 26 1949 Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull



MY NEWS-READING DAYS
by WILFRED PICKLES

INSIDE BUCHMAN'S SHANGRI-LA
by GEOFFREY WILLIAMSON

For Morning Freshness

Euthymol
TOOTHPASTE

FROM ALL CHEMISTS

A PARKE-DAVIS PRODUCT

MAYFAIR FASHION TRAGEDY

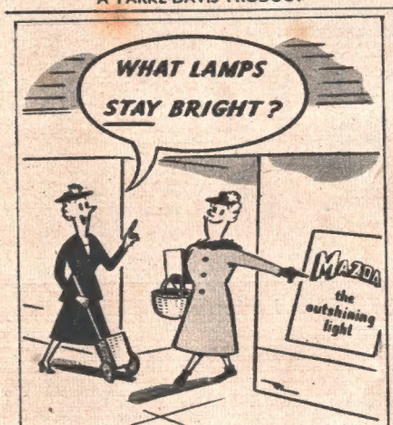
ANGELA – I WISH YOU TO DESIGN LADY MADLING'S BERMUDA WARDROBE
THINKS WHAT A WONDERFUL CHANCE!
THESE ARE ROTTEN! IF ONLY I DIDN'T FEEL SO TIRED...
NEXT DAY
I'M SORRY. THESE WON'T DO AT ALL
WE'VE LOST A VALUABLE CUSTOMER, ANGELA
I'VE NO GOOD IDEAS ANY LONGER – I'M ALWAYS TIRED
THAT EVENING
MAYBE IT'S THE DULL FOOD WE GET THESE DAYS...
DO SEE THE DOCTOR DARLING
AT THE DOCTOR'S
YOUR ENERGY IS NOT CONTROLLED SOLELY BY FOOD. SLEEP IS VERY IMPORTANT TOO. BUT IT MUST BE THE RIGHT KIND – DEEP SLEEP – TO DO ANY GOOD. I RECOMMEND HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT
AND SO HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT
SOME WEEKS LATER
DE RAMBIGNY HAS A WONDERFUL NEW DESIGNER – ANGELA PENNING
THINKS SUCCESS – THANKS TO HORLICKS!

Are you always tired?

DO YOU WONDER why you have so little energy, why even when you wake in the morning you are listless and tired? Perhaps you put the blame on food-rationing, and recall the good pre-war meals.

But it isn't food alone that controls energy. Something else—off the ration—is just as important. Sleep! But it must be *deep* sleep to be really restoring. Horlicks helps you to get *deep* sleep. Start drinking Horlicks tonight. In the morning you'll wake refreshed and full of energy.

HORLICKS



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CAPPIT: A game for 2-4 players, who try to "Catch and Cap" their opponents. As easy as ludo, but how much more exciting! **7/6**

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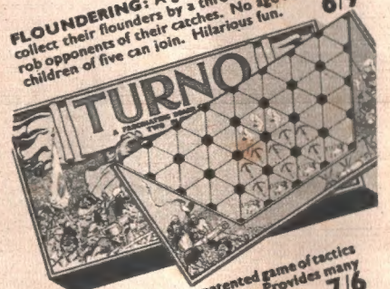

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EDITORIAL

The man on the beat is the best deterrent

IF WE HAD MORE POLICEMEN we should have less crime.

However much they may disagree about such matters as capital punishment and prison reform, all the leading authorities agree on this.

That is why the undermanned state of our police forces is a grave matter—not only to social workers, magistrates, judges and police chiefs who are in special positions of responsibility, but also to ordinary members of the public whose security may be threatened and whose family life is in danger.

It was hoped that the first recommendations of the Oaksey Committee—on police pay—earlier this year would make the service attractive enough as a career to bring in many stalwart and intelligent new recruits to the force.

For a time recruiting was indeed stimulated. But the impetus has now spent itself. Fewer men are coming in. So the sooner the Oaksey Committee publishes its next set of recommendations the better. These will deal with conditions of service, including houses.

If they are forthright, and if they can be carried out at a time when housing and many other programmes are being reduced by the national economy programme, the latest Oaksey reforms may bring in another fresh batch of men to be trained, and the Committee will have done a good job by the police and the public.

MEANWHILE, the beats go unpatrolled, the criminals get bolder and, worst of all, there can be little check on the drift of young people into bad ways.

Lord Templewood, chairman of the Magistrates' Association, has admirably summed up this peril by saying: "Whole districts, especially in the great new housing estates, scarcely ever see a policeman. Yet a constable patrolling a regular beat, and seen by every boy and girl in the neighbourhood day in and day out, is one of the most effective deterrents against the juvenile delinquency which often ends in serious crime."

The criminal population mostly starts young. The only way to stop its growth is to catch young offenders before they become hardened and emboldened. Then they can be submitted to modern methods of moral rescue.

The aim of up-to-date methods is to prevent crime rather than to cure it. The first step to prevention is to lay prompt, firm hands on a boy before he goes too deep into mischief.

To do that, you must have enough policemen. This is not the dramatic side of police work. It has none of the synthetic thrill of the murder hunt, of top-speed car chases after armed bandits, or of scientific detection ending in brilliantly conducted court cases.

No—this is the quieter but nobler aspect of police service which will pay the biggest human dividends in the long run.

Yet today it is being neglected simply because there are not enough police to do more than grapple as well as possible with violent crime, while coping with all the other routine duties now loaded on to the force, such as traffic and crowd control.

The London police alone are estimated to need urgently over 4,000 more men, and the provincial forces another 8,000.

For crime has nearly doubled since the war. In 1938 the total of known crimes was 283,000. Last year it soared to half a million. And when the figures are analysed it is seen that no one abnormal tendency can be blamed. All sorts of crimes have doubled, from those of violence through breaking and entering to sex offences.

IMMEDIATELY after the war we were assured by experts that the crime wave was just a normal postwar reaction. Then, as it mounted instead of diminishing, we were told it was because of shortages, which made theft of clothes, food and other goods more tempting.

Well, many of our shortages have ended—but the greatest abundance is still that of criminals.

These facts point inexorably to the conclusion that the arm of the law is neither long enough nor strong enough. It is not far-reaching enough to stop the young offender while there is still time to turn him into a decent citizen. More police is the answer. More police we must have.

Yet how can London, for example, expect to get the men it needs while 400 of its married policemen are forced to live apart from their families in section houses, and when another 300 have unsuitable quarters? Recently in Glasgow, one-seventh of London's size, 274 married policemen could not find homes in the city. The same dismal story comes from every big city, and from many country districts as well.

In view of the far-reaching social evils caused by unchecked crime, there is a strong argument for giving extra housing priority to the police forces. It seems that this, coupled with much-improved pay and conditions, will alone get the recruits we must have.

And all the scientific equipment and fast cars in the world will never replace, in preventing crime, the continual presence in our streets and suburban roads of the Man in Blue—the old-fashioned copper on the beat.

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1
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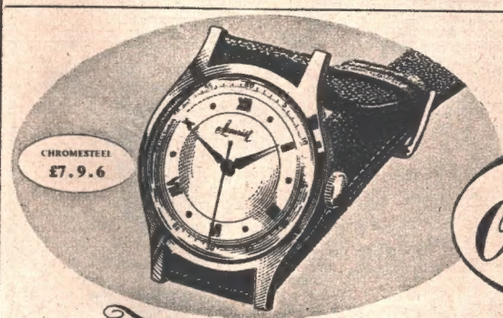

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Free Speech

TIPS FROM A HOUSEWIFE

HERBERT MORRISON'S recent speech gave ten good tips for housewives. Most women with families could add to them. I have three children and only £5 16s. a week to live on, and have to learn as I go along. Here are three of my tips:

Shop where you can count on a smile. Never go back to the man who can only grumble about the Government.

Set a target for gas and electricity and watch the meters week by week to see that you are not using too much.

Try to get every member of the family interested in a hobby—and don't mind if the hobbies mess up the home a bit. It's worth it.—MRS. T. R., Birmingham.

Unfair To Babies

JAMES MASON, the "Odd Star Out" (JOHN BULL, October 29), apparently carried his film cruelty to females into his private life when he handicapped his infant daughter with the appalling name of Portland. This tendency to inflict

Poor Portland?

children with obscure names is, unfortunately, increasing. It would be a good idea if we adopted the Tibetan custom of having three names, one at birth, one when the child goes to school and the third when it is grown up.—VICTIM, Pendlebury, Lancs.

Brawl Sport

DENNIS HOLMAN'S EXCELLENT ARTICLE ON hurling (JOHN BULL, November 5) made no reference to one of the principal things for which hurling is noted—the frequent exhibitions of pugilism. A great many hurlers seem to regard an opponent's head as a better mark for their hurleys than the slitter and seem bent on spilling blood. Consequently, matches often end in a brawl.

For roughness, hooliganism and prize-fighting in the world of sport, hurling takes the biscuit.—E. RYAN, Camus, Costelloe, Connemara, Co. Galway, Eire.

The Silent Cities

MANY THANKS TO IAN BEVAN for his article "30,000 Silent Cities" (JOHN BULL, November 5) and for the lovely picture of Tyne Cot Cemetery. This brought back wonderful memories, as from 1931 to 1938 a large party, including myself, made a yearly tour of the cemeteries from Ypres to the Somme, and it was at Tyne Cot that we scattered the ashes from our local Field of Remembrance.—F. W. GODDARD, 13 Ringwood Road, Eastbourne.

. . . I AM AN ENGLISH GIRL working in Denmark. Here in this lovely town of Svendborg there are buried seven British airmen who were killed during the war.

It is in a circular garden with a cross to the memory of each boy and in the centre a stone with the Danish inscription: "Thank you for all that you did." There are flowers and shrubs and a little path and an air of tranquility which cannot be described.

The names of the men are: P/O D. Hughes, Sgt. A. Redfearn, Sgt. D. Stean, F/Sgt. N. Sefton, F/Lt. R. Ballantyne, F/Sgt. R. Walker, R.A.A.F., and Sgt. R. Cameron, R.C.A.F.—MISS VALERIE TURNER, Otto Rudsvej, 1, Svendborg, Denmark.

The Churchill Article

VIRGINIA COWLES'S ARTICLE "The Two Winston Churchills" (JOHN BULL, November 5) and the coloured portrait which accompanied it will convince many of your readers that JOHN BULL is a magazine for the people and not for a party. That is how it should be.—E. EVANS, 116 Tyla Celyn Road, Penygraig, Rhondda, Glam.

Scholarship Worship

SINCE AN ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIP became essential for attending a grammar school, scholarship worship is becoming a menace and destroying parents' sense of proportion.

A feeling of strain pervades even the infants' school. I am a teacher and my little five-year-olds have scarcely dried their tears after being plunged into this strange whirl of school life before a parent is at the door asking anxious questions about their progress.—G. ARMSTRONG, 23 Knole Road, Dartford, Kent.

Potatoes At The Ready

VISITING HOLLAND, I went with a friend to a greengrocer. To my amazement she carried a bucket. She asked for potatoes and, after weighing them, the assistant put them in a machine and they came out peeled, washed and ready for the saucepan. Are we behind the times?—MISS P. SWAIN, 37 Baxter Square, Austin Estate, Derby.

Women Barred

A LARGE PROPORTION of our local food committee is made up of men and the working-class housewife hasn't got a look in. She is beginning to wonder if she ever will have.—MRS. V. ENGLAND, 10 Pool Street, Bodmin, Cornwall.

Should A Doctor Tell?

FOLLOWING AN EXAMINATION at a local hospital, I was put in a plaster cast. Ten days have passed and still my own doctor and I do not know the reason. It's time specialist doctors told their patients what is wrong.—D. M. HALL, 15 Castle Road, Walsall Wood, Staffs.

. . . MY BROTHER died recently from tuberculosis. Though he received good medical treatment, he was allowed to know that he lost weight most weeks, which troubled him a good deal.

Surely this knowledge could be kept from patients who are doomed.—MRS. K. O. T., Somerset.

Harvey Graham, M.D., writes: No rules govern how much a patient should be told but the tendency nowadays is to tell more. Tuberculosis patients, in particular, often respond better to treatment if they can co-operate fully.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter

I used to curse that man . . .

"There goes the Refuge Agent—good luck to him! I used to curse him though—told me how to grow roses and talked life assurance at the same time. I wasn't a good listener until that awful business down the road . . . The widow was just about destitute. Made me think—I realised what it would cost for Mary to keep up this house and give the kids a good start. After that—I met the Refuge chap at the gate . . ."

Issued by the **Refuge** *Assurance Company Ltd.*

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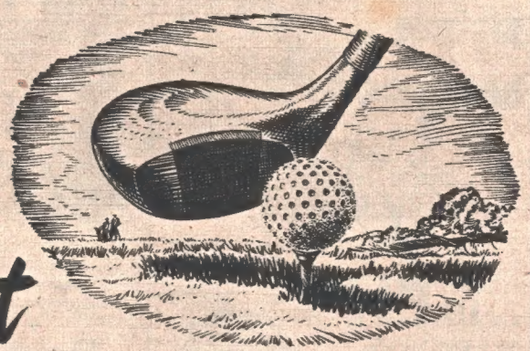
Ask Mummy, who enjoys it at Eleven.
Ask Daddy, who likes it 'last thing'.
Ask the children, who love it anytime!

real Chocolate flavour!



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HE'LL BE DRIVING BETTER STILL!

No . . . not on the golf links—on the road. This sporting Ford-owner has taken advantage of the Ford Engine Exchange Plan. His car, handed over to the local Ford Dealer during the course of the morning, will be ready *within a matter of hours.* The old engine which has served him so faithfully will have been replaced by a factory reconditioned engine guaranteed for six months. His Ford will have a new lease of life, a new heart. And the whole job will work out at *considerably less than the usual charge for an engine overhaul.* The Ford Engine Exchange Plan is just one of the many Ford Service Facilities.

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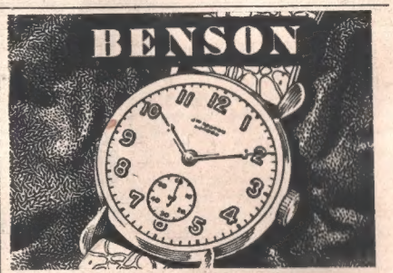

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Group of Buchmanites at Caux from (left to right) Holland, U.S.A., Indonesia, Japan, France. Mountain House "guides" have propaganda rôle

INSIDE BUCHMAN'S SHANGRI-LA

by GEOFFREY WILLIAMSON

They said he would be "free to probe as he pleased," so Williamson flew to Switzerland to see what goes on at Dr. Buchman's mountain headquarters at Caux and to make this first-hand survey of a much-criticized movement

THE IMMIGRATION OFFICER at Northolt Airport looked baffled. As he examined each successive passport his eyebrows rose a little more.

"What's this little lot?" he asked.

"Oxford Group. Special - charter flight," I told him, and filed through to the waiting-room.

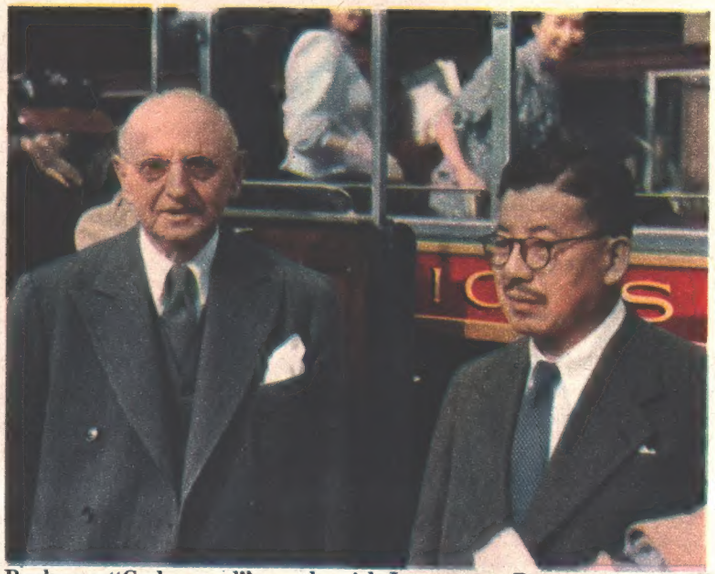
Geneva - bound aboard the *Maid Marian*, a gleaming blue Dakota, I came to understand the official's perplexity. Our passenger list included a general, one or two women of title, two youngsters from Siam, an ex-diplomat from Czechoslovakia, a sprinkling of wealthy industrialists and, in the next seat to mine, a man who once led a dock strike.

It was, indeed, a mixed "little lot."

Yet *Maid Marian* was only one of three special planes ferrying equally mixed passengers between Northolt and Geneva. We were en route for Caux, the Oxford Group's Shangri-la, scene of what was to be, perhaps, the strangest international conference ever staged—the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament.

In the past few months 8,000 delegates from eighty-two countries have visited Mountain House, Caux, a former luxury hotel which stands 3,000 feet above Montreux, looking grandly down upon the Lake of Geneva. As the *Caux Palace*, it was bought in 1946 by the Swiss branch of the Oxford Group for about £80,000.

I was armed with lists of distinguished delegates—diplomats, politicians, titled people and religious leaders. I knew that mingling with these V.I.P.s were miners, steelworkers, shipyard workers, teachers, reformers, students and a host of other very ordinary folk. What power, I wondered, drew so many contrasting representatives to a mountain spur in Switzerland?



Buchman, "God control" apostle, with Japanese ex-Premier, Katayama

It had been strong enough to move the United States House of Representatives to send a bipartisan delegation by military plane. The Dutch Cabinet had sent its Minister of Social Affairs. Japan had sent its first postwar Premier. There were British M.P.s, the Speaker of the Ceylon Parliament, the President of the International Red Cross and the Secretary of the Swiss Federal Assembly.

I knew that to find an answer I must determine, if possible, whether Moral Re-Armament is merely inflated idealism or, as its sponsors claim, the sole key to the future peace of the world.

Officials in London had responded to my curiosity by giving me a seat in one of their special planes and the freedom of Mountain House. I was, they agreed, to be an independent observer, free to probe and comment as I pleased.

I was met at Caux by Garth Lean, a member of the Council of Management, whom I had previously met in London. "We're sharing a room," he announced as he grabbed my bag. "Delegates have been pouring in

Scandinavian folk dance session at Mountain House. A dream-palace air, polyglot crowd of thousands, help-yourself meals—and superb organization

all day. Mountain House and the three other hotels in Caux owned by the Group are packed."

When we arrived at Mountain House, soup was brought to me by a granddaughter of Lloyd George, Mrs. Michael Barrett. Then a young Australian airman, Jim Coulter, who piloted Sunderlands during the war, showed me to my room.

The hotel is built into a shoulder of the mountain, so that the entrance hall is on the fourth floor and most of the rooms are below stairs. Having descended endless flights to my room, believing I was going underground, it was a shock to step through the french windows next morning on to a flat expanse of lawn.

It Beats Edgar Wallace

In the old days, when the *Caux Palace* was the haunt of millionaires, Edgar Wallace stayed there and spent his holidays pouring fantasy into a dictaphone. He devised nothing so incredible as the story of Mountain House today.

I looked up from a terrace on which Mussolini is reported to have toiled as a labourer. The towers and minarets had a dream-palace air which fitted the polyglot crowds gathering for a cafeteria breakfast. I saw every type of national costume; heard conversations being conducted in scores of tongues. Yet there was no confusion.

At Mountain House people come and go in thousands. They get help-yourself meals, though there is also a limited restaurant service where Group officials may entertain special guests. Another room is set apart for those who are on health diets.

Crowds mass for assemblies in the main hall. Others file into the theatre for the stage shows that are put on nightly. The precision is uncanny. I saw evidence of superb order and organization, but the organizers themselves kept out of sight.

A twelve-page leaflet, "Welcome to Caux," which every guest finds in his room on arrival, explains, in part, this invisible control. There are facilities for hairdressing, dry cleaning and shoe repairs. There is a resident doctor and trained nurses are always available.

The average cost of maintaining one guest at Caux for a week is about £9, but he may pay whatever he can manage.

The basic organization is undertaken by volunteer workers who have come at their own expense and "with a sense of privilege" to give long hours of work in servicing the assembly.

Extra volunteers are enrolled from among guests to help the cooks, vegetable teams, dining-room service teams, cleaning and washing-up teams and the housekeepers or office staffs. I went through vast kitchens and sculleries and saw what strange combinations sometimes result.

Members of four different political parties from the Italian Parliament took off their coats to do washing-up in unison; and the Mayor of Bethnal Green found himself polishing silver at the same bench as a councillor who had formerly opposed him.

Even with volunteer labour of this kind the assembly will have cost nearly £60,000 in 1949. The purchase of Mountain House itself was made possible through gifts from supporters of many nations. Some gave everything they owned. There have been countless gifts in kind. Three tons of miscellaneous food came from America. Swiss supporters provided 2,000 sheets. Five tons of flour came from Canada, 100,000 eggs from Denmark. France sent 900 knives and 600 dusters; Finland 1,000 glass plates and 400 folding chairs.

Blankets, coffee and hot-water pots, carpets, chinaware and matting have come from Britain; rice and honey from Italy; coffee and tea from Kenya; teaspoons and glassware from Sweden. Jamaica sent three tons of sugar. German supporters supplied 200 tons of coke. Egyptians provided cotton for sheets.

The volunteer catering is on a scale to match the best hotel service. Dr. Buchman urges women in the Group to take special pains with their cooking as a way of expressing their love for their families. Undoubtedly much of this loving care goes into the preparation of the meals served at Caux. It is perhaps not surprising if its highest manifestation is to be seen in dishes which find their way to Dr. Buchman's table.

The More The Merrier

If Dr. Buchman is a connoisseur of a good meal he likes others to share his appreciation. His table is always crowded — some say too crowded for comfort. Once he insisted on packing in not less than twenty-one guests at an oval table in his Berkeley Square home.

During his temporary absence, conspirators inserted a spare leaf. On Buchman's return they were preening themselves on the fact that at last they had elbow room, but before he had finished the soup their chief looked around with an air of surprise. "Do you know," he said, "I believe we could squeeze twenty-four in at this table."

No visitor to Caux is ever left to his own devices. Some member of the Group is always at his elbow to maintain a non-stop commentary on the principles of Moral Re-Armament.

The "guides" know all Dr. Buchman's pet slogans by heart. "If everybody cared enough and everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough?" is one favourite. "There's enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed," is another.

There is also a definite "know-how" at Caux. Accommodation in "the little dining-room," where meals of superior quality are served in greater comfort, is limited, but those in the know always contrive to get their charges in with them. In the same way, though there is not room in the theatre for all the guests, and there is a lively traffic in tickets, some Group members always seem to be able to secure good seats.

Twice daily there are assemblies in the main lounge at Mountain House at which delegates are given an opportunity of speaking. A full-time, unpaid official usually takes the chair, sitting in the centre of a low platform, with chosen speakers ranged on either hand. Behind him sits a choir in national costumes.

Although there is an informal atmosphere, Group officials have admitted to me that these gatherings are always carefully schemed to put over a special message. Some, they say, may even be directed at one individual who, in their view, needs to be "changed."

After a brief word about the speakers, the chairman calls upon the choir to open proceedings by singing one of the Moral Re-Armament theme - songs, such as "The Good Road" or "If You Harnessed All The Heart-Power In The World." Heavily weighted with uplift and sentiment, such songs are rendered with tremendous verve.

The vast room seems vibrant with goodwill. Dr. Buchman, his back to the light, sits sideways near the front of the hall, one eye on the platform, the other on the audience. I have seen him take up a similar position at entertainments in cinema and theatre.

Delegates who have arrived that day are invited to stand up as called upon. They do so, country by country, each group receiving a round of applause.

At one assembly I attended, deafening applause greeted a lone delegate in Burmese dress. Instantly, Dr. Buchman was on his feet. "Come over here," he shouted across the hall, thus, consciously or not, swinging the applause and interest back in his own direction.

Many Speeches, One Theme

The quality of the speeches delivered at assemblies varies considerably. Any possibility of oratory is nullified, since all are delivered one sentence at a time while an interpreter stands by to follow up with a free translation.

During my stay at Caux I heard speeches by Horace Holmes, M.P., Robert Tilge, general secretary of the Employers' Association of Northern France, Mme Irene Laure, former secretary-general of the Socialist Women of France, and Senator Eleanor Butler, joint acting secretary of the Irish Labour Party. Most were variations on the same theme—reiterated hopes that Moral Re-Armament will bring about a better spirit between nations.

Whenever an assembly seems to flag it is saved by the chairman calling the choir into action. A song has been

Continued on page 28

Lloyd George's granddaughter, Mrs. Michael Barrett. "On my arrival, she brought me soup"

Sheffield Groupers gave 180 pieces of silverware for Mountain House international "pool"

JOHN BULL November 26 1949

Tasty line in frogs and snails

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

A Frenchman comes to Britain with some of his country's delicacies. Most people fight shy, but demand is going up

Jordache and wife show the proper way to eat snails with tongs and fork. Afterwards the liquid is sipped direct from the shell

IT'S DIFFICULT, as the rhyme has it, to make the mouth of a Covent Garden porter water; he handles too many delicacies to be easily impressed by gastronomical fantasies. But Mr. Jordache does—by talking about frogs. "I tell them how to cook frogs and what the taste is like. They love listening, it makes them happy."

Mr. Jordache, who is a vital, sympathetic Frenchman of thirty-seven, does more than just talk about frogs; he will supply anybody with as many as he can eat at a few hours' notice. Or, if his fancy runs that way, with snails, salami and tiny Spanish eels; with Persian strawberries or a nice Strasbourg sausage.

Although Jordache's telegraphic address in London is "Delicatess," he doesn't think of these things as delicacies. "They are good for you," he says, "delicious to eat and thrilling to cook. Such things make you happy."

Prejudice Still Strong

Several hundred people are the happier in these days of austerity for Jordache's drive and enterprise. When I met him in his office near the Euston Road he had just finished the day's distribution of frogs and snails—300 dozen of each.

"I could place three or four times as many," Jordache says. "The demand for frogs, especially, is prodigious. For snails, too, but in their case the prejudice is still very strong.

"People in this country don't understand snails. They somehow associate them with the manure heap. Actually, the snail is a clean-eating vegetarian. As you can see in your garden.

"After all, the English love whelks, which also are snails. But in England you don't get the cultivated Roman snail, the big one. Like this."

Jordache picked up an enormous, rose-coloured shell from his writing table. "This one was seven years old. Just the right age for eating.

"You tell the age by the number of dark ridges on the shell. I once cooked and ate a snail that was seventeen years old, which could be a record. But usually we eat them when they are five to eight years old."

Jordache was born in Paris, and learnt all about snails and everything else that has to do with the table when he managed a famous restaurant on the French Riviera. In 1946, on an Englishman's advice, he came to London, where he spent his first ten months learning the language.

During this time he met and married a girl from Lancashire. He liked England and was not happy when his Home Office permit ran out.

Hawked Them Around

But Jordache is a determined man. He got his permit extended and, with another London Frenchman as partner, set up on his own in January this year. In those early days he hawked his snails round in a basket, travelling by bus and tube. Now he has a smart lorry and deals in hundreds of dozens. "It was when I had confidence in snails that I began dealing in frogs," he says.

Frogs—only the legs are eaten—are a far trickier import than snails, which arrive ready cooked and need only be put in the casserole. Frogs are highly perishable. That's why, like oysters, they can only be eaten in this country during the cold months—the months with an "r" in them.

Jordache remembers his first consignment of frogs. There was some hitch at the airport, and when he finally cleared them through the customs, they were beyond human aid. His second consignment was almost as disastrous.

"It was a hot day," Jordache recalls. "My wife and I sorted the frogs as we tore round the hotels in a taxi. The ice was melting, you see."

Nicer Than Chicken

Expertly cooked, Jordache claims, frogs are more delicious than the tenderest chicken. But not any frog will do for the table. The common or garden frog, though edible, will be tough and tasteless. It will be small, with reddish flesh. The cultivated frog, larger, tenderer, has flesh of a beautiful, glistening cream.

Jordache's frogs come from the marshes of the Vendée, in western France, where they are scientifically bred and selected. They cost five shillings a dozen. His snails are imported from the *escargotières*—the snail farms—of Burgundy and Savoy.

Jordache will supply frogs and snails to private customers, but so far he has few of these. His clients are the big London hotels and restaurants. There is also a demand from the smaller restaurants which cater for a special clientele of gourmets.

"You understand," says Jordache, "these things need *cooking*, and the English are not yet interested in cooking. Take a mushroom. In England you skin the mushroom and cook it till it's black. Like cinders.

"In France we never skin them and cook them gently till they are just a faint, delicious brown. And take a steak. It was months before I persuaded my wife that a steak must be underdone."

Jordache hopes to import several tons of mushrooms this season, along with Spanish pomegranates and melons, blackcurrants, apricots, caviare and eels. He hasn't got a permit for caviare yet, nor for fresh minced pike, but he keeps trying.

"These things are considered luxuries," he says earnestly, "but they make people happy and that's very important."

He himself looks a very happy man and a good advertisement for his products. He works an eighteen-hour day and never takes more than four hours' sleep. "I walk quickly about the streets till midnight every day," he says, "it's that that keeps me fit."

He is up at half past four and gets to Covent Garden by five o'clock in the morning. "Everyone knows me there. They call me the Frog Man." He wears a little gold frog in the lapel of his coat. After the Garden he goes round his customers and is back at the office by noon, taking orders, answering telephone calls from France or Spain or ringing up the suppliers. The morning I was there he took and gave an order for three thousand peaches and opened negotiations for oysters from the Channel Islands.

"You have splendid oysters in England," said Jordache, "but these ones are very special. They come from the Ile du Sein."

Jordache covers most of Western Europe in his search for good things, but he relies mainly on the riches of his own country. His sausages and salami come from France's eastern provinces; his oysters from Morlaix, in Brittany; the ham for which he hopes to have a licence will come from Holland and south-western France.

How About An Octopus?

I was lucky to see him the morning a sample of Persian strawberries had arrived by air from Grasse, in the Alpes Maritimes. Small and oblong, they melted in my mouth and smelt almost as sweet as they tasted.

I suggested that he might bring in a few octopuses. Jordache made a note of it but was a little doubtful. "The octopus is delicious," he agreed, "but I don't think there would be a demand for it here. People must be educated up to that."

Jordache, like the good chef he used to be, is never satisfied. As he gets bigger quotas he plans to expand his business and put the good things of Europe on the average Briton's table. Eventually he hopes to open a real French restaurant in London.

"Something with a striped blind and little compartments for eating where food can be really enjoyed. Then I would be content."

He had to have another drink. Today of all days, he needed another drink. How could you expect a woman to understand?

HAVING DONE THE ERRAND at the post office, which he had timed with a beautiful precision that he imagined completely hoodwinked those left at home, Mr. Arnold crossed the Market Square just as the doors of the Spreadeagle Inn were opened.

This morning he was in lamentable condition. He felt he would never get through the day without aid. Never, never, never.

Deep inside him was a curious dead sensation of which he was very frightened. It lay in the pit of his stomach like some coiled serpent fast asleep, and he was fearful that at any moment the thing would waken and writhe up in unholy, destructive fury. And ultimately it was himself would be destroyed. Not his critics, today collected in dark possession of his home.

He sailed into the pub with his ample, slightly rolling carriage, a man of substance who was handsomely ripe of body and face, his spick-and-span attire conservative as a psalm to godliness: no one could say Mr. Arnold neglected his person.

Of the town's few pubs the Spreadeagle was his favourite haunt. It was cosily shut in on itself, dark with shadows, low black-beamed ceilings, copper gleams, honest smells, and morose windows hostile to light. In the hall a torpid spaniel bitch looked at him with the heavily drooping eyes of a passée actress; she knew Mr. Arnold, and there was no necessity for even a languid wag of her tail. Always the first customer, he stepped inside with his usual opening-time briskness.

But Mrs. Walton, polishing glasses behind the bar, looked at him with a start. "Well—!" she seemed about to exclaim, but only pursed her lips.

"A whisky," he said. "A double."

"A double?" Something was concealed in her tone.

"Yes, for God's sake." The false briskness was suddenly deflated. "And pour another for me while you're about it."

SHE said firmly: "*No*, Mr. Arnold. Not *two* doubles. . . . It isn't right," she bridled. "Not today. Good heavens! Don't forget you've got to be there sober at two o'clock. No, Mr. Arnold."

"Hell!" he muttered. He looked over his shoulder with child-blue eyes round in fear. "Where's Alec?" A man would understand, must surely understand what that day really meant. Women were incalculable in the domain of the affections, could run so drastically from the extremes of loving solicitude to the bleakest savagery. "Where's Alec?" he peered.

"Gone to London for the day," his wife said. "Gone to buy me a budgerigar."

"Gone to London," he mumbled, preoccupied.

"They can chirp ever so sweet," she said tightly, "and intelligent, my goodness!—my sister had one that would hop on the table when she was making cake and stone the raisins for her."

"What?" He started from his glassy preoccupation.

"The budgerigar she had. With its beak. Intelligent, my stars! . . . I've

Mr. Arnold sat down heavily on the hard oak chair. "You are drunk," Miriam said icily. "Blind drunk"

A human condition

by RHYS DAVIES

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

known many a human being," she added forbiddingly, "that could do with their brains and feelings."

Both the Malt Shovel and the Bleeding Horse, which were on his way home, were only beer houses. No licence for spirits. But there was plenty of time. He would climb to Cuckoo Ridge, up to the Self Defence. Its landlord, whose wife had been in an asylum for years, would understand. There was the Unicorn, too, nearer, but repellent with its horrible modern cocktail bar, its café look and its dirty waiters.

AFTER being solicited with flattery and whining, Mrs. Walton allowed him a single whisky more. She asked him what would be said in the town if she allowed him to have all he wanted on that morning of all mornings. He left the house with dignity, part of him preoccupied with feeling offended, but the greater part obeying a huge desolate urge to complete the scarcely begun journey into that powerful state where he would feel secure, a captain of his fate, if a melancholy one.

He had never been able to take to drinking at home. Besides, Susan never encouraged it. Never a bottle of whisky in the house.

In the shopping street those people who knew Mr. Arnold—and they were many, for by now he was a local celebrity—looked at him with their cheerfulness, due to the brilliant day, wiped momentarily from their faces. But he encouraged no one to pass a few words with him; time must not be wasted. He took a side turning and began to climb among loaded apple and pear trees spread over garden walls. The whole fragrantly warm little town was fat with sunlight, fruit and flowers.

Mr. Arnold began to pant and lean on his expensive malacca stick.

Above on the bright emerald slopes with their small well-groomed fields, cows stood like shiny china ornaments. The short local train from London puffed a plume of snowy cotton-wool. It was toy countryside, and Mr. Arnold felt obliged to admire its prettiness: it had been Susan's idea to live here on his retirement from his highly successful career in the City lanes near Tower Bridge, where scores of important men knew him.

He liked to feel that London was still near, he liked to see, on Sundays and bank holidays, clumps of pallid Cockney youths and girls in cycling knickers dotting those slopes like mushrooms. The high air, clear as mineral waters, was supposed to be good for one. Susan said it eased her chest, and she had become a leading voice in the Women's Institute. . . . Ah, Susan, Susan! Her husband panted in sore distress, climbing.

On Cuckoo Ridge the landlord of the Self Defence greeted him, after a slight pause, courteously. But Mr. Arnold saw at once that he was in the know. Rapidly he asked for a second double.

The landlord, a stout placid man in braces, looked at him. Perhaps he saw a man in agony of spirit; he served the drink. Mr. Arnold thought he felt deep sympathy flowing from this man whose own wife had been shut away from him for several years already. He asked for a third double.

The landlord mournfully shook his head. "Best not, Mr. Arnold."

"One more," said Mr. Arnold. "Only one. I've got a day in front of me." In the pit of his stomach was a stirring of fear, as if the sleeping coil shuddered. "Never be able to face it," he whimpered.

The landlord shook his head in slow, heavy decision.

"There's the circumstances to consider," he said.

Mr. Arnold attempted a hollow truculence. "My money's as good as anyone's——"

"Now, sir," said the landlord distantly, "best be on your way." And, solemnly, "You've got a job to do, Mr. Arnold."

Mr. Arnold walked out with deliberate steadiness. A clock had struck twelve thirty. It would have to be the Unicorn; and time was pressing now. Actually he had already taken his morning allowance, but today . . . today. . . .

He descended from the Ridge with a careful step, crossed the watercress beds into the London road, and looked sourly at the gimcrack modern façade of the Unicorn, a rebuilt house done up for motoring whipper-snappers and their silly grinning dolls.

He went in like an aggressive magistrate with power to deprive the place of its licence. But he cast himself into a bony scarlet and nickel chair with a groan, wiping his brow. A white presence slid up to his chair.

"Double whisky," he said.

"Yes, Mr. Arnold," said the waiter.

KNOWN here too! He cocked up an eye sharply. In a blurred way, the grave young face looking down at him was familiar. Ha, it was Henry, who used to come with his father to do the garden! Quickly Mr. Arnold assumed the censorious glare of a boss of substance. "And mind it's genuine Scotch, Henry," he said.

He did not like the boy's solicitous look as he withdrew to the blonde cinema star serving behind the jazzy zig-zagged corner counter. He took out his big presentation gold watch and looked at it importantly. Was there a pausing at the bar, a whispering? Surely he, who had been a guest at Lord Mayors' banquets in the Mansion House, was not going to be dictated to in a shoddy hole like this?

Henry brought the double. "Get me another, my boy," Mr. Arnold said. Henry hesitated, but withdrew; came back—"Sir," he said awkwardly, "sir, there's no more except this single. Our supplies haven't arrived; they'll be here by tonight."

Was everybody his enemy that day? Was there a plot against him? After that long walk to be allowed only this! Mr. Arnold pushed back his chair, made an effort to collect his forces for dire protest. But somehow—was it because of guilt or the heat?—they would not assemble.

He could only gaze fixedly at Henry in silent reproach, anger and, finally, entreaty. "Very sorry, sir," mumbled Henry from far away. "Can I call up the garage for a taxi, sir?"

"A taxi? Certainly not." He swallowed the single, tipped lavishly, rose like an offended emperor, sat down, and rose again, thunderous yet dignified.

"Your stick, Mr. Arnold." Henry handed it.

He needed it now. Outside, his eyes could focus neither on the shifting ground nor the burning pansy-coloured sky. The soft amateur hills ran into each other like blobs of water-colours imperfectly handled. But he would walk, he would walk. Anything rather than be in the house before it was quite essential. Not with *them* there.

The town hall clock—its notes gentle, unchiding—struck the quarter after one. Yet those chimes were like knells bringing grief. Grief, grief. A sensation of burning grief, physical and staggering, pierced him. He sat gasping on the low roadside wall. The day was no longer brilliant, crackling with sun. The desolation of what awaited his presence swept down on him in gusts of black depression.

God above, he could never face it. Not without. . . .

He rose with remarkable celerity.

Why had he forgotten the Adam and Eve? Fool, fool! He walked rapidly, a man refreshed, stick striking the road almost evenly. But outside the Adam and Eve, a sixteenth-century house sagging in a dark medieval alley hidden in the town, he paused to arrange himself into the aspect of a man with a grip on himself.

INSIDE, the poky cool bar parlour was deserted except for a cat enormously asleep on the counter. Mr. Arnold called, "Hey! Customer here!" He banged the counter with his stick. No one appeared. Not a sound shifted into the stagnant air.

He gave the cat a sharp dig with his stick; it did not stir or open an eye. He shouted, thumped the counter. A dead petal of plaster fell from the ceiling. But no one came. The silence closed impervious over his shouts of anguish. No one passed in the shadowed alley outside.

His stick rang frenziedly on the counter. He had a feeling that he was imprisoned in a dream in which a senseless frustration dogs one's every move. The cat slept. The hands of a dusty old clock remained neatly and forever together at twelve o'clock. The bottles on the shelves looked as if they were never opened. He jabbed at the cat again; it did not move out of its primeval sleep.

Mr. Arnold whimpered.

He lurched over to the door in the crooked bellied-out wall and lifted the old-fashioned latch. But the door wouldn't open. Had it been locked behind him? Was he being imprisoned? "Who's there?" he screamed, banging his stick furiously against the rickety panel. The after-silence did not budge. He tore madly at the latch. Suddenly the door flew open: it had jammed in the ancient frame. Raging, Mr. Arnold stamped down the passage, threw back another door.

A dazzle of pink interior light struck into his eyes. He stepped into a hot living-room with a huge window and an open door leading to a garden blazing with snapdragons, roses and hollyhocks. A blue-gowned woman, immensely fat, was pegging out washing over the gush of flowers. Mr. Arnold all but sobbed with relief.

"Customer!" he yelled.

"Be there in a minute," she called, affably. "It's a beautiful drying day."

"Got a train to catch," he bellowed: "I want a double Scotch."

"All right, all right." Smooth and brown-faced as an egg, and with a dew-lap of turkish chins, she indolently left her basket, saying, "No need to be crotchety. Where there's one train there's another; they've got the extra summer service now to London. I'm going up myself on Thursday. My daughter's going to be examined. . . . Why, it's Mr. Arnold!" She paused, in pastoral caution. "Are they taking her by train, then? I didn't know."

As if this settled her doubt, she hurried into the bar. Mr. Arnold said nothing. He drank the double in two gulps and asked for another, saying quickly, "Then I've got to hurry." The woman talked of her daughter with soft, unstressed tact. He paused uncertainly after the second double.

"No, Mr. Arnold," she decided for him, "I can't give you any more."

"Mrs. Busby," he said grandly, grasping his stick as for a march. "I know when to stop."

"Gents always do," she nodded approval. "God bless you."

NOW he felt translated into the desired sphere. Where he could survey his kingdom without lamentations. Power radiated in him. As in the old days of his office fame, he could have settled a ledger page of complicated figures in a twinkling. And that menacing dead weight in the pit of his stomach had vanished. He felt himself walking erect and proud though the luncheon-quiet town. He required no one's compassion.

This heady brilliance lasted him all the way home. And he would not be late; a fixed stare at his watch testified to that. He congratulated himself on the efficient way he had handled his time. *They* would not be able to rebuke him for being late, on this day of all days.

Yet sight of his well-kept villa at the edge of the town struck a note in his soul like a muffled knell. The garden, green-lawned and arched with trellises of roses, was trim beyond reproach—the packet he spent on it every year! And the house was leanly white as a wedding cake.

But quite suddenly now he felt that its walls and contents, its deeds and insurance policies, no longer interested or concerned him. At the gate he paused in panic. Was this the first faint rising of the horror he thought was obliterated from his being? . . . But almost at once this fear became blurred. His stick decisively tapping the crazy paving, he rolled up under the arches of roses with an air of having unfortunate business to transact.

The white-porched door was wide open. He entered bustlingly. Out of the drawing-room came Miriam, his elder sister-in-law. The woman in charge now, and his enemy. She looked at him and shrank. "We waited lunch as long as we could," she said in her hard gritty way. Her husband hovered behind her, thick horn glasses observant. "I wanted George to come and look for you. . . ."

"Food!" Mr. Arnold said, in high rebuke. "You didn't expect me to eat lunch *today*!"

They all advanced out of the drawing

room into the hall, looking at him sideways. Ellen, the younger sister-in-law, and her husband, the dentist's assistant; their grown-up daughter; and Miriam's adolescent son. Alert but careful, visitors and yet that day not visitors, they were all dressed-up and important, as if they were going to be photographed.

Mr. Arnold stretched his hat to a peg on the stand but miscalculated its position—"Cursed thing," he remarked solemnly to the fallen hat. He sat heavily in the hard oak hall-chair and wiped his brow. "In good time," he observed. "Five minutes yet. . . . What—what you all standing there for?" he jerked up his head despotically. He saw tears streaming down Ellen's face before she turned and, hurrying into the drawing-room, moaned, "I shall be ashamed to go. He's ruined the day. Something must be done. Henry——" she motioned to her husband. But Miriam, stark and glaring, still stood there like judgment.

"They're coming. . . ." called her son, who had gone to the open door and was keeping a watch on the lane.

"Two o'clock!" said Mr. Arnold in a solemn but strangely forlorn voice. "Two o'clock!" Still collapsed in the chair, he groaned; his glassy eyes rolled, then stonily looked forth like tortoise eyes.

Henry came back and whispered to Miriam's husband: they advanced briskly to Mr. Arnold. "Look now, old boy," George attempted male understanding, "we think you'd better not go with us. We will see to everything. Take it easy and have a rest." Enticingly he laid his hand under Mr. Arnold's armpit, while Henry gripped the other arm. "They're here; come upstairs," he coaxed. The two sisters watched in pale angry withdrawal.

Mr. Arnold, shaking away the possessive hand, rose from the chair tremendously. "What!" he panted. "Better not go!" Masterfully he drew himself up. "Me! *Me!*"

"*You are drunk,*" pronounced Miriam in icy rage. "You are blind drunk. It's shameful." Ellen wilted with a bitter sob against the wall.

Mr. Arnold's eyes bulged. Their devilish shine enveloped Miriam with a terrible contempt, restrained for many years. "This," said Mr. Arnold, "*this* is no time for insults. The pack of you can clear out now if you like. . . . *I will go alone,*" he said defiantly.

"Now look here——" George began, conciliatory but aghast.

At that moment four men loomed in at the open doorway. Four tall men, sleek and black-garbed, leanly efficient of aspect. With everyone in the hall black-clothed too, the fair summer day seemed turned to shadow. The drawing-room clock struck two dainty pings. At the sound the four men entered, admirably prompt. There was something purifying in their sinewy impersonality.

"Upstairs," said Mr. Arnold, steady as a stout column; "in the back room." The black quartette filed up the stairs.

"Have you decided to risk it?" Henry muttered to the women, while Mr. Arnold reached with glacial but careful dignity for his black hat. There was whispering, a furtive watching of him. Down the staircase came the four men with the coffin tilted on their shoulders. The seven mourners stood back. Mr. Arnold's face was stonily set again. He followed the quartette out with a stern and stiff gait. George and Henry, watchful, went close behind him.

But the two sisters, under their fashionably crisp black hats bought especially for this journey, crept forward with heads bowed very low: asking pardon of the world for this disgrace.

Mr. Arnold negotiated half the length of the crazy paving with masterful ease. Then he began to sway. A hand grasped the trellis of an arch, and a shower of pink and white petals fell on his head and shoulders; his hat dropped out of his hand. The two men took his elbows, and now he submitted to their aid.

Ellen sobbed anew; and Miriam moaned, "We can only hope people will think it's grief." Then she hissed frantically. "Brush those petals off him, George; he looks as if he's getting married."

The hearse contained its burden, the three limousines behind were elegant. "Four wreaths," said the supported Mr. Arnold, hanging out his head like a bull. While the impersonal mutes went back to the house, the mourners disposed themselves in the cars.

Though the two sisters had planned to occupy the first car with Mr. Arnold, their husbands went in with him instead. "Now take it easy, old boy," said George, glassily friendly now. Mr. Arnold was well-off, and a triumphant example of industrious rectitude in the City.

"Eh? . . . eh?" said Mr. Arnold, vacantly. And, sunk between the two men into luxurious cushions, straightway went into a doze. The car began its two-mile journey with a silent cosy glide.

"We mustn't let him go right off," Henry worried. "Hey! Mr. Arnold, hey!"

Mr. Arnold opened his eyes ferociously. "The best wife a man ever had," he groaned. . . . "Susan, Susan!" he called wildly. The driver turned his head for a moment. "Ha, shameful, am I! . . . That woman hasn't got the intelligence of a . . . of a . . . budgerigar! And no more Christian feeling than a trout. Who'd have thought she and Susan were sisters! . . . And that other one," he grunted, "what's her name . . . Ellen, always grizzling and telling Susan she was hard up and her husband kept her short—pah! . . . A depressing lot," summed up Mr. Arnold, staring rigidly into space. Then again he called in loud anguish, "Susan, Susan, what will I do now?"

Beads of perspiration stood on Henry's forehead. But George remained cool; despite the abuse of his wife, he even sounded affectionate—"Never mind, old chap," he comforted the bereaved, "it'll be over soon. But keep awake, don't let down the whole family."

"What family?" asked Mr. Arnold. "Got none."

And slunk down and torpid, he seemed a secret being gathered eternally into loneliness.

"Susan," whispered Mr. Arnold, chin on chest, "Susan. . . . God above!" he wailed, "what will I do?"

They were going through the shopping street now; people stopped to look.

"The only one of the bunch to keep her sweetness," muttered Mr. Arnold. "Coming here in their showy hats!" he chuckled. "But they couldn't make a man feel proud like Susan. . . . That time I took her to the Mansion House banquet. . . ."

But wild grief engulfed him anew. "Susan, Susan," he called, "what'll I do now?"

"Here, pull yourself together," Henry protested sharply at last, and perhaps feeling Mr. Arnold had gone far enough in insults. "We're coming to the cemetery."

Mr. Arnold heaved into alertness for the ordeal. In a minute or two the car slid to a delicate standstill. Inside the cemetery gates was a group of half a dozen women, representatives of the Institute for which Susan had organized many an event. Out of the lodge came the surpliced rector, prayer-book in hand.

Henry got out first and, red-faced, offered a hand to Mr. Arnold, who ignored it and alighted without mishap. But for an awful moment the widower's legs seemed boneless. Then he drew himself up nobly, stood rock-like in ruminative power, while the coffin was drawn out and borne ahead.

The two sisters stood in helplessness, hiding their faces, but peering like rabbits. The procession began to form. The vicar turned the pages of his book in mild abstraction. George and Henry sidled up beside Mr. Arnold.

"I'll walk alone," hissed Mr. Arnold and reminded them fiercely that Miriam and Ellen were entitled to follow immediately behind him. He insisted on this being arranged. The Institute women, who seemed unaware of anything unusual, took their places in the rear. The cortège moved.

The cemetery was cut out of a steepish slope. Mr. Arnold, close behind the coffin and without his well-known stick, climbed with an occasional lapsing of his knees, a straightening of his back, or a rigid turning and jerking of his head, like a man doing physical exercises.

But he achieved it victoriously. Behind him Ellen wept and Miriam stared in blank fear.

It was not until all were assembled before the graveside and the service had begun that Mr. Arnold began to display signs of collapse. He vaguely swayed, his head lolled. George and Henry took a step nearer him. The vicar droned on, the Institute women remained tactful behind the chief mourners.

The attendants took up the roped coffin; it disappeared; a handful of earth was thrown in after it. Presently the vicar's voice stopped. George and Henry took Mr. Arnold's elbows to assist him for the last look.

"Leave me alone," Mr. Arnold muttered, drawing his elbows angrily away. What had these to do with him!

He advanced with renewed dignity to the brink of the grave. Looked in as if into an abyss of black tremendous loneliness. Stood there staring down in concentrated intentness, prolonged, fascinated.

The vicar waited in faint surprise at the mourner's lengthy scrutiny.

George and Henry darted forward. Too late.

While a single hysterical woman's cry shot up, Mr. Arnold shot down, falling clumsily, arms flapping out, his disappearing face looking briefly astonished, the mouth wide open and showing all his artificial teeth. There was a moment's hesitation of unbelieving dismay.

Then the bustling began. Mr. Arnold lay down there on his stomach across the coffin. An upper denture gleamed out in the clay beside him.

"I knew it," said Miriam afterwards. "I felt it in my bones when you two allowed him to walk alone to the graveside. . . . Thank heaven *we* don't live here." They were in the villa in conference. Mr. Arnold had been taken to the county hospital with a fractured leg.

He stayed there two months. The first patient to be received out of a grave, he was the talk and pet of the hospital.

As the night sister remarked, "He must have been a devoted husband, to throw himself into his wife's grave like that. I've never known a man grieve so much."

"You'd never believe Pearl used to be a ballet dancer, eh?"

THE TORY HOPEFULS

VIRGINIA COWLES, brilliant American-born commentator on British politics and politicians, writes an intimate survey of the top Tories—their personalities and their individual prospects if the Conservatives win next year's General Election. Her article will appear in . . .

JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

SNAGGE: "The man lived up to his voice. He told me why they'd sent for me"

HIBBERD: "Typified British in a crisis. Off the air, a good storyteller"

BELFRAGE: "Tall, dignified, he wasn't happy to replace me up North"

McLEOD: "Was regarded as a B.B.C. rebel. He commented on my début"

LIDELL: "If he made a mistake on the air, it worried him for days"

MY LIFE (8) by WILFRED PICKLES

I join the Portland Place types

To London as news reader at nearly double my old pay. I hear that it's hoped my accent will fox the Nazis. The cartoonists make a butt of me

"'. . . and this is Wilfred Pickles reading it.' That first time, I was soon perspiring, what with nervousness and the warm studio"

JOHN COATMAN HAD instantly given his blessing to the proposal that I should go to London as a news reader, and he called me into his office to emphasize the importance of this move, which I am sure he considered to be a victory for the north of England.

I learned a little more when I went down to Portland Place to talk things over with John Snagge. For several years I had been in fairly close touch with him through memos and telephone calls and had found him easy to work with: at our meeting in Broadcasting House I liked him immediately.

If a man has ever lived up to the impression created by the sound of his voice it must be John Snagge. I noted that his manner was every bit as soothing as his words. I had heard he was one of the best-liked men in the Corporation and I was not surprised.

I asked John what was behind it all. "After all, the news is being read so very well at present that I can't see how I can improve it," I said.

John explained quite bluntly that it was not his idea. "It's the Minister of Information, Brendan Bracken," he went on. "He suggests a change of voice, as he feels listeners are getting a little tired of the so-called Oxford accent; and as a security measure because your accent might not be so easily copied by the Germans."

My Short "A"

I was rather surprised to hear of the high-level origin of the idea to give me a try-out, but more concerned that I was indeed to be given a free hand. I mentioned this to John.

"If I'm going to be criticized or made to modify my style I can see myself drifting and becoming a carbon copy of the voices you've already got, then the whole experiment will fall to the ground," I said.

And I warned him that my homely style was bound to creep in, as well as the short "a," about which the newspapers were already talking so much, because I was first and foremost an actor. I had always felt that in news reading I would fall into the habit of expressing my own feelings in my voice.

Much as John appeared to like me as an individual I felt certain he was opposed to the change. He ran his department efficiently and I gathered he was rather upset that it should be interfered with by a member of the Government.

Without any hesitation, he said: "Go ahead and do as you like." If he had not been so human and fair he might well have told me to go ahead and make a mess of it to prove how wrong some people were and how right he was.

So we arranged that I should start reading the news on November 27, and that I should take over the announcements which followed the bulletins two or three days before that date.

Before I left John, it occurred to me that Mabel and I would find it hard to live in London on my salary of £480 a year and I asked if there was a possibility of a rise. To my amazement it was agreed on the spot that I should be paid £800 a year!

So we again packed our bags and moved into an hotel in Welbeck Street, only half a mile from Broadcasting House.

Watched The Others

As soon as we had been shown to our rooms, I dashed off to Portland Place to meet the other news readers and learn something about their routine, and for several days I continued the practice of watching the preparation of news bulletins, acquainting myself with the route from the news room to the studio, and making sure of the timing.

How dreadful it would be, I thought, if on my first night I were to lose my way and the B.B.C. news was late on the air. What would the German propagandists make of that? It was a very serious business—and I knew it!

The other readers made me welcome, all of them except Bruce Belfrage, who was being taken off the news to replace me in Manchester.

He was disturbed about it all, and I remember how Bruce, tall, dignified and soldierly, boomed in that deep voice of his: "What on earth am I expected to be in Manchester—'Billy Welcome'?" He was just about the last person we could imagine as "Billy Welcome"!

But I liked him no less than the others who did what they could to smooth my path in this testing time when letters were pouring into the B.B.C. and newspaper offices attacking and defending the principle of my advent as a news reader.

He Stood Me One

Perhaps the calmest of them all was Frank Phillips, a suave type who never became ruffled. I shall never forget Frank for a generous gesture when I was first introduced to the news readers. He immediately rushed off to the canteen and returned with a couple of drinks and wished me luck.

Joseph McLeod was regarded as a rebel in the B.B.C. but he had a warm, friendly personality and was the only one of the five readers who told me after my first bulletin what he thought about it. He liked it.

Alvar Lidell was perfect according to B.B.C. standards, for his reading was

Elizabeth Miller, pronunciation expert, in the B.B.C. news room. "She was a godsend to us announcers"

cold, detached, impersonal, and he was a stickler for absolute accuracy. He almost wore himself out in his vigilance against mistakes and if he did err, even slightly, it worried him for days on end.

Then there was Alan Howland: he was small, untidily dressed and seemed never to be without a trench coat whose belt he tied too tightly round his middle. Essentially an actor, Alan was a lover of poetry and held clear-cut views about life.

Only once had he seen a "talkie": "I can't stand people's voices coming from under my seat at me," he would say. It was a tragic loss to the B.B.C. and his many friends when Alan died in 1947.

Behind A Famous Voice

One day during my introductory period, Stuart Hibberd came down from Evesham and I soon discovered what a singularly refreshing character he was.

There has been more curiosity among listeners about Stuart Hibberd than about most of our broadcasters: if they were to expect somebody rather parsonical and prudish they would be well wide of the mark, for Stuart is sharp, mentally agile, imaginative and amusing.

I found he could appreciate north country stories and could tell a good tale himself, but perhaps his most outstanding characteristic was his genius for making a person feel he was the one individual Stuart had wanted to meet all day.

When I met him years afterwards he made my day by greeting me with great enthusiasm; and straightaway he said: "Do you know the story of the mermaid?"

He went on: "Well, an officer on the *Queen Mary* went to the captain on the bridge and said: 'Excuse me, sir! A mermaid would like to see you in the wardroom.'

"The captain told him not to be so stupid, but the officer pleaded, 'But, sir, I do assure you. . . .'

"So the captain went to the wardroom and there, sure enough, was a mermaid who said quietly, 'I'm sorry to be such a nuisance, but would you be so kind as to move your ship about ten inches away from the side of the dock?'

"The captain said: 'My dear madam, do you realize what you are asking? This ship is eighty thousand tons. I couldn't possibly do such a thing.'

"'Then would you be good enough to move it about eight inches?' the mermaid asked. The captain said: 'Madam, but why?' and she replied: 'Well, as a matter of fact, you've shut my sister in the lavatory.'"

Only Stuart could have put over that story adequately. It was made for his accent which I had admired on the air. His voice represented something in Britain which I liked: it was the epitome of the serenity and composure of the British people in their most testing times.

My excitement rose as the big day approached. The Press did not leave me alone and my name was appearing daily in all the national newspapers: there were jokes about "this man from Yorkshire" and cartoonists depicted me with shirt sleeves rolled up and wearing a muffler and a cloth cap!

There were clearly two rival factions on the issue and the constant references to me were scaring. I felt notorious and I was convinced about what was at stake.

I had the drill clear in my mind. After arrival at half-past four, there was a visit to the news room where the bulletin was being prepared by sub-editors who passed on their "copy" to the news editor. He, in turn, checked it, deleted a sentence or two and altered a few phrases.

In this room which buzzed with activity and where half a dozen typewriters continually clattered the messages for the millions, there was a long script-strewn table with a chair in the centre for the news reader and a place slightly to the right for the news editor.

At the other tables sat the preoccupied, serious-faced men, their shirt sleeves rolled up, who handled the news and specialized in a particular branch of the war: Russia, Middle East, home bombing or European resistance. They dictated their reports, a procedure which at least ensured that the news could be spoken.

Helped With Tongue-twisters

On the left of the news reader always sat Elizabeth Miller, a living encyclopaedia on pronunciation, who advised the news readers about the way they should put over the strange foreign names of both individuals and places which so often cropped up in bulletins—particularly now that Russia was in the war.

She was a godsend to the announcers. As my knowledge of languages was so scanty, I realized that I would need her assistance pretty regularly.

I had noticed that the news reader initialled each page as it was passed to him by the news editor as proof that he had seen it, and that at five minutes to six he would be handed the bulletin as it stood at that moment.

This up-to-the-minute technique rather staggered me, especially when I heard the news editor telling Alan Howland to go on with what he had. "We'll bring the rest down later," he said.

The news reading studio—S.1—was a cramped, airless basement room equipped with a desk, high stools like those against a bar, and two bunks for the Home Guards who stayed on all night. Straight in front of the announcer's position was a window which might have been a car windscreen and which gave a view over part of a control room where engineers turned knobs and watched meters and lights in alleys of robot-like contraptions.

Somebody had, with consideration, supplied a blind which could be pulled down by the announcer to shut out the engineers. I had made up my mind about that: I would pull down the blind as soon as I got inside the studio.

Alan Howland not only left it up, but pulled faces and made rude gestures at the engineers as he read the news!

I had also tried out the stool and found it offered a comfortable position. All except Joseph McLeod thought so, too: he was the only one who read the bulletins standing up.

I had studied closely the eccentricities of each announcer and once I saw something which made me hope they would never televise the reading of the news; for, as Alvar Lidell read, he opened the top of his trousers and rubbed his stomach for the duration of the bulletin!

"Can I help you, Dad?"

With my plan of campaign embedded in my mind I said goodbye to Mabel and she did all she could to try to relieve the strain, saying: "Well, never mind. If you make a mess of it we can always go back to the north!"

I made my way to the news room, scanned through the sheets that were handed to me, almost completely ignoring the contents of the bulletins in my eagerness to spot any queer names. Elizabeth Miller was there and she even came down to the studio to pat me on the shoulder and say: "Don't worry, it'll be all right!"

On the way down with the bulletin in my hands, I had to show my pass again to a man sitting on a low stool near an iron door that looked as if it might have been taken from a battleship. This was a ritual from which no announcer, however well-known, was excused.

When Broadcasting House got a bomb, Freddy Allen was standing at that great iron door. The bomb crashed into the lift shaft and the terrific explosion caused a rush of air which blew Freddy beyond the door and up along the passage.

As he scrambled to his feet, his grey hair powdered with soot and his eyes filled with dust, he called out: "Well, that's the first time I've got through that door without showing my pass!"

I entered the studio and as I perched myself on the stool and pulled down the blind I heard through the headphones that were lying on the desk the pips which signalled the six o'clock news. "Here it is!" I thought.

On The Air At Last

The red light flashed in and out quickly. I pressed the button which told the engineers I was ready. The red light came on and remained steady.

And I was on the air with: "This is the B.B.C. Home and Forces Programme. Here is the news and this is Wilfred Pickles reading it."

The bulletin was a long one and lasted about twenty minutes. Soon, I was perspiring, and by the time I had finished, my face and hands were saturated, partly through nervousness and partly due to the atmosphere of the warm, enclosed studio. I drew a deep breath in relief as Franklin Engelmann took over.

As there were a few minutes before the next part of the programme, he had to put on a gramophone record, and I was astonished to hear him announce: "After what we have just heard, I think this would be a most appropriate piece of music." And he put on "On Ilkla Moor Baht 'At."

Joseph McLeod was telling me he liked the way I had read the bulletin when the phone rang. It was Mabel.

I could visualize her with her eyes shining and her cheeks flushed. "It was marvellous!" she said. "It was great. But I'm furious!"

I asked her what was wrong and she explained what had happened in the hotel as she had sat tugging nervously at a handkerchief while listening to my bulletin.

There were a number of people in the lounge when the set was switched on just before six o'clock. After I had read half the bulletin, a woman suddenly stood up and broke into the stillness by going round saying, "Can't we switch this dreadful man off? Do you mind?"

Each person replied, "Oh, certainly do!" But when she reached Mabel the unanimity ended. For Mabel said: "No, don't! I rather want to hear it."

So, whether they liked it or not, the news was left on until the very end.

In a corner of the room was a woman who, it turned out, was a Russian doctor. She must have been studying Mabel's

Continued on page 18

LACE LETS IN THE LIGHT

by DON EVERITT

Frosted windows were put up against pattern spies—a glamour craft became hole-in-the-corner. Now, though some old stagers shake their heads, reform is on the way

GRIM AND BLEAK, the old tenement factories crowd the narrow, twisting streets and reach high into the Nottingham sky. The guide books say you should not miss this spot. It is Nottingham's claim to fame, the home of one of the most beautiful products of the machine age: the lace market.

But to thousands of men and women the 200-odd lace factories in and around Nottingham recall memories more bitter than romantic. In the industry's procession of slumps between the wars its manpower dropped by 30,000. During the war most firms, except those on Government orders for mosquito nets and other war goods, had to close.

Then, after VJ-Day, the luxury-starved world clamoured for lace. There was—and still is—plenty of work. But a new crisis rapidly developed: a labour shortage.

Many lace workers, "directed" to comparatively new, well-equipped factories in the war, stayed in their safe jobs. Modern youth, rest-room and canteen conscious, would not look at the dirty, cramped, noisy lace factories.

Battle For Survival

Nottingham's up-to-date industries—cigarettes, bicycles, telephones, medicines—were more attractive. Well over half the workers left in the trade were over forty; some were in their seventies and eighties; too few were in their teens and twenties.

But a handful of men had started the battle for survival. The war had shown them the value of co-operation. They put their ideas over to the other manufacturers.

It was not easy going. Their business, almost entirely dependent on fashions and novelty of design, has always made the lace makers secretive, suspicious and very much lone wolves.

In a small room up two narrow flights of stairs behind a row of shops in Parliament Street, Nottingham, sit John MacCallum and his three assistants. On the wall behind them is a spider-web diagram listing a score of the problems of probably the most scientifically backward industry in Britain.

John is head of the Lace Federation's Research Council. He is showing the Colonel Blimps in the trade that what was good enough for grandfather is not good enough today.

He is persuading them, for instance, that good lighting is far more important than frosted or ribbed windows to keep out spies; that back-support seats for workers will cut fatigue and increase productivity; that wash basins and lockers are more likely to attract trainees than buckets and nails.

Three Big Problems

And all the time he's putting over these and other more technical improvements, John, with his assistants, is tackling the really big problems:

The problem of finding a substitute for black lead, the machine lubricant which makes the job filthy and saturates the worker's clothes, forcing him to use a special chair at home.

The problem of re-designing machinery to reduce noise and weight. ("There's great scope here," says John, "because between the wars the makers had so few orders that they weren't able to experiment.")

The problem of finding a substitute for the linen strings between the jacquards (cards punched with holes like a pianola roll which make the lace pattern) and the shuttle control on a fancy lace machine. ("Linen expands and contracts in different atmospheres, often throwing machines out of order and holding up production for hours.")

At the end of an interminable labyrinth of corridors in Nottingham's

All ready for export. But in the workshops the prejudices of the lone wolves still have to be broken down

Loose ends the machines leave are fixed by hand. For a luxury-starved world new ideas are badly needed

Technical College, and a quarter of a mile away, in the College of Art, they are at work on the training schemes started by the manufacturers.

Behind his desk in the "Tech," C. H. Edwards, head of the textile department, points a pipe stem and says: "The trouble with the lace trade is that it has nothing to show the budding trainee, no text books, no exercise books, just a machine and cotton.

"Yet it is one of the most difficult and tedious trades to learn. Everything must be memorized."

So Edwards may well feel pleased. In the three years since the two-year lace furnishings course began some two hundred part-time trainees have taken it. This term a new course begins for fancy lace.

Not far from Nottingham, at Oxford Buildings, Long Eaton, you can begin to see the results of all this effort—in the shape of a smile on a man's face.

Three years ago, mention of lace wouldn't have brought a smile from forty-six year old Moses Parker. In 1946 this forthright district officer of the Transport and General Workers Union was on the working party helping to gather a lot of unpleasant and none-too-promising facts.

They were facts about short time and unemployment, about price cutting and piracy of designs, and about debasement of quality in goods.

Moses will tell you that the trade did itself a lot of harm prewar through its own foolishness. Quality of lace was regularly lowered to increase sales. But women didn't find this out till they washed their lace. Then the "filling," as the dressing is called, came out and the article went limp.

Says Moses: "With deception like that people quickly stopped buying lace.

"Now," Moses smiles, "we've got our neck in front. Output per worker is going up, most wages are twenty per cent higher than in 1946 and the trainees are coming in—although still not as fast as we would like.

"But, more significant, some of the old hands are coming back and there's gradual improvement on the welfare side."

The wages structure of the lace industry is more complicated than a lace pattern itself. Every stage in the manufacture of every type of lace has a different rate.

Wage Rates Are Good

But, as examples, Moses says the average wage today of a fancy lace twisthand—lace maker—is £7; a trainee of fifteen starts at £2 4s.; a skilled woman brass bobbin winder gets 2s. an hour. All of which, he adds, compare well with other skilled trades.

Lace, however, is a complicated industry with many sections: leavers (fancy lace), lace furnishings, embroidery, plain net and so on. And there are some people who are not so happy about wages as Moses.

At the College of Art, John Ambrose diligently cleans a lace machine that he has just finished operating. John is seventeen, tall and slight, with a thin, blond moustache and a ready smile. He is also a very good example of the type of youth the lace industry badly needs.

When he was fifteen he won one of eight scholarships offered yearly by the lace firms. "I came into the trade," he says, "because there seemed to be plenty of opportunity and scope for ideas."

Youngsters Need Help

Now he has finished the two-year course and is getting a job. The industry should nurse youngsters like John Ambrose very carefully. But will it?

He wants to be a draughtsman. That is a good thing because, like designers, they are scarce, so scarce that the working party issued an emergency recommendation to get recruits.

Yet of thirty-odd students who have taken the course at the college since 1946, Louis Collier, the head of the department, knows of only five who have stayed in the trade. Some have been back to tell him why they quit—they couldn't live on 35s. a week.

One seventy-two year old Nottingham lace furnishings draughtsman, as competent as ever he was, can today earn only £7 10s. for a forty-four-hour week. And that after fifty-eight years in a highly skilled and artistic job which takes ten years to learn completely.

Says Collier: "You can't expect young people to stay in the trade when a dozen more are offering them equally attractive and far more lucrative jobs."

Tradition is slowing the industry's progress, too. Scientist John MacCallum still finds diehards and sceptics among the bosses, but he is quite philosophical about them. "When they see our ideas bearing fruit in the more go-ahead firms, then they'll come into line."

There are some manufacturers for whom John and his assistants don't work fast enough. "They've never seen a scientist before and they think we are magicians. They expect us to solve in six months what they haven't solved in a hundred years."

Wouldn't Use Lockers

Most workers, John finds, are fairly co-operative. But a few of the older ones are inclined to be awkward when he tests ideas at factories.

The go-ahead employers have also come up against these ex-aristocrats of local industry (in the good old days they had special rooms set apart for themselves in the pubs).

One man recently installed lockers in his factory. He was astonished when several men refused to use them. One told him: "Nails in the wall have been good enough till now—and they'll be good for a while yet."

Unpleasantness from old hands cost another enterprising firm several of its part-time college trainees before they were able to put a stop to it. The manager explained: "The men probably remembered too well their own eight-year apprenticeships and pocket-money wages and resented these rather pampering methods."

But Moses Parker can tell of the finer qualities of the traditional system, qualities which he would be very sorry to see disappear. Moses knows men who have a love of their craft as deep as any human love, men who would down tools if asked to produce anything but their best.

And, despite past slumps, there is often a fine degree of friendliness and kindliness in a lace factory. There is no "Mister" or "Sir." The boss is Bill, Jack or Harry, and often he works side by side with the men.

Moses recalls the recent case of one old man who had to retire due to illness. He'd been with his firm since it was formed and his first employer, the grandfather of the present one, once told him: "You stick by me, Bill, and I'll stick by you."

The grandson is honouring the verbal agreement that he never heard—with a pension.

Inside And Out

Because of financial and building difficulties it will probably be some time before the old tenement factories can be replaced. But if, as Moses says, conditions and systems are continually improved inside them and a splash of paint is used here and there on the outside, then lace will soon get back to its distinguished position in Nottingham industry.

The demand for lace is terrific, its export value is high. Its pioneers back in the last century were tough and enterprising. Today these old qualities are returning.

Eye Witness

by JEANNE BARRY
ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RAINER

It was true the baby couldn't talk yet. But she had seen him do the murder. And at eighteen months—hadn't a colleague pointed out?—a baby had a memory

FOR THE FIRST twenty minutes after he had clubbed Claudia to death with a brass candlestick, Don Mason sat quietly on his sun porch and waited for the police to come.

As the minutes stretched into an hour, he began to wonder when they would come. A little later, he wondered if they would ever come. At the end of two hours, he was beginning to believe he had committed the perfect crime.

Although the murder was impulsive, and committed in sunlight on the jutting sun porch of his flat, he had had the good fortune to have his curtains drawn on two sides. The third side had been open, but no one had been visible on the sun porch of the next flat but a baby in a playpen. It had shattered him to look up, the candlestick still in his hand, and see that baby yowling fiercely at him.

His growing belief that he was undetected now made him act swiftly. He finally managed to get Claudia's body into a trunk. He put the trunk into his car; and that night he drove to an abandoned stone quarry, whose depth was unknown, and pushed the trunk in.

In his preoccupation, he scarcely gave a thought to the girl who had disenchanted him so brutally. He hadn't meant to kill her; he had only meant to hurt her as she had hurt him. What had turned him into a killer was the smug, taunting smile which had accompanied her announcement that she was leaving him and the city to marry a man with money. He could see that smile yet, before it froze on her lips.

The next day he returned to the school where he taught. It was a nervous day, because he couldn't quite reason away the fear that he looked like a man who had murdered.

THE days passed uneventfully. By a great effort of will, Mason was able to achieve a kind of calm. He knew it was unlikely that anyone would notice very soon that Claudia had disappeared. None of his friends knew her—and the management of her hotel would probably conclude that she had simply left town.

Mason's period of relative tranquillity ended abruptly some ten days later. He was sitting around a table in the common-room with three other teachers, when the conversation turned to a forthcoming meeting of a child-study association.

"I'm not going," Jane Peters said. "I was at the last one. It was dull. All about the age a baby starts to remember."

"At what age does he?" Mason asked.

"Oh," Jane Peters said, "I think somebody said a year and a half."

Don Mason's cup clattered to the table. He stared at her. "You mean a child can remember something he saw at a year and a half and tell about it later?" His voice was flat.

"It seems so," Jane replied. "They documented it pretty well."

"I can't believe it," he said.

She shrugged her shoulders. Just then the afternoon class bell sounded. The other teachers started up.

After they had gone, Mason reported ill, and hurried home. In his building's courtyard he spied the woman next door, sitting alone, pushing her baby backwards and forwards in a pram.

He sauntered over. "Hallo," he said to the baby.

The baby stopped chewing on the handlebars of her pram and looked up. Then she shrieked.

"Linda!" the baby's mother said reprovingly. She turned to Mason. "Please don't pay any attention. She's been strange lately."

"How old is she?" he shouted above Linda's increasing roar.

"Just a year and a half," the mother said, bending to comfort the weeping child. Mason bade the mother an agitated goodbye and hurried up to his flat.

For the next week he tried to find out whether the baby could talk. He watched the courtyard but never saw her. One evening, in desperation, he knocked at the door. An unfamiliar girl opened it.

"Are they home?" he asked.

"No," she said. "They've gone to the pictures. I'm the baby sitter."

"Oh," he said. "I live next door. I was wondering if the cleaners left anything for me."

"Come in," she said. "I'll look."

The baby was playing quietly in the playpen. She turned round and looked at Mason, then her face contorted and she screamed.

"Linda, Linda," the girl called. "I don't know what's the matter with her. She's been acting strange lately." She ran her eyes over an array of clothing in a cupboard. "I can't see anything."

"Does the baby talk?" Mason asked.

The girl looked at him curiously. "Yes. She's very advanced. She says lots of things."

He grabbed her by the shoulders. "What, for instance?"

She shook herself free and opened the door.

"I can't think off hand," she said, and pushed him quickly into the hall. He heard the bolt slide into place.

He went back into his flat and slumped into a chair. So she could talk. And the strange way that sitter had acted. Mason stared at the brass candlestick. He'd have to get rid of it. Nervously he rose, took his car keys and went downstairs. A short ride in the country might steady him.

Before he had driven a couple of hundred yards a police car signalled him to pull up. His heart began to pound. He bit his lip so hard he could taste the blood. The policeman rested his foot on Mason's running board. "Did you know, sir," he said gently, "you're driving without your lights?"

Relief surged through Mason's frame, leaving him moist and drained. "Thanks," he said, and switched them on. The police car moved on, and Mason

As the woman picked up the candlestick, Linda toddled into the room. At sight of Mason she let out a shriek

drove back to his flat. He flopped on the settee without bothering to switch on a light. In the darkened room, he became acutely conscious of every footfall in the corridor. Each time footsteps approached his door, he rose, ready to swing it open and shout, "Here I am! I did it."

But the footsteps always kept going. Except once.

He heard them coming down the corridor—slowly so that the number on each door could be read. The footsteps were muffled, probably by rubber soles. At his door, the steps stopped.

Mason stumbled through the darkness to his door. He clutched the doorknob and waited for the pounding. The seconds passed in silence. His hand became so moist that he could hardly grip the knob. His heart beat so thunderously that he was certain that the silent, listening figure in the hall could hear it. Convulsively, Mason pulled open the door.

There was a man right outside. He was half-kneeling on the floor, tying his shoe-lace. He looked up, startled. Mason recognized him vaguely as someone he had seen around the building. He banged the door shut and collapsed on the settee.

After a sleepless night, he phoned the school and reported ill. He had hardly replaced the receiver when a knock sounded on his door. It was the baby's mother.

"Oh, Mr. Mason," she said, "some of your mail was dropped in our box the other day."

"Thanks," he said. "Won't you sit down?"

"No. Linda's out in the hall. This is the first time I've seen your flat. My, I wish we could have ours done up." She walked admiringly round it. At the table, she reached over and picked up the brass candlestick. "How nice," she said. "I haven't seen one since I was a little girl. An heirloom?"

Linda toddled into the room. At the sight of Mason, she let out an unearthly scream. Her mother quickly dropped the candlestick and looked at Mason with embarrassment, almost—it seemed—with guilt. "I'd better take her home," she said. "She's being strange again."

They left, and Mason dropped into a chair. His face fell into his hands and his fingers shuffled through his hair. He got up and paced round the room a few times. He hesitated at the bureau; then he grabbed his car keys and went down to the street. He drove rapidly to the police station. . . .

Linda's mother read about his crime and confession in the morning newspaper. She was sitting in the apartment courtyard. Near by, Linda was chewing on the handlebars of her pram. A baker's roundsman passed. "Hallo, baby," he called. Linda looked up and shrieked.

THE HUMAN MACHINE

O.K. For Sound

BEWARE of high-sounding words. Think what they *really* mean. Translate them into common things.

"Humanity" is a lovely word, but it only means a lot of ordinary men and women. "Nation" and "national" roll nobly off the tongue, but your thinking will go awry unless you realize that they only mean you and me and millions like us.

Fine words are apt to put the mind to sleep. How many bombs have been thrown in the sacred name of "brotherhood"?

By taking words at their face value you're falling into the trap laid by demagogues in all ages.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

"It's an 'as you were' from the registrar's office—something about a clerical error in the licence"

MY LIFE by WILFRED PICKLES

Continued from page 14

expression, and certainly she had noted the twisting handkerchief.

Moving across to Mabel she said in broken English: "Do you know this man who is reading the news?"

Rather defiantly, Mabel replied: "Yes, as a matter of fact, he's my husband." And the Russian doctor clapped her hands in ecstasy, exclaiming: "I knew! I knew by the sparkle in your eye!"

When I read the midnight news, I remembered John Snagge's words, "Do as you like," and I rounded off the bulletin by bidding the listeners: "Good night to you all—and to all Northerners wherever you may be, good neet!"

This, it was later discovered, came as an especial pleasure and a link with home to the north country lads serving in foreign parts, whether the Middle East or the south of England.

I was ready for a rap from the B.B.C. but none came, and the first official reference to it was not made until two or three weeks afterwards when John Snagge said to me: "We rather like your good neet!"

I now had my first experience of a big fan-mail. People wrote from all over Britain, from factories and air stations, London clubs and village pubs, from big houses with names and tiny cottages with numbers.

But what was clear from the letters was that the lads from Leeds and Manchester and all points north, south, east and west of those cities where the short "a" was part of the dialect, found my voice brought them a comforting feeling that the old familiar places and faces were still there. While the praise came to me, the abuse poured into the postal section of the B.B.C.

Gradually I grew accustomed to my new job, and it was a big consolation to have the likeable and helpful Engelmann as my partner: he followed with the announcements, and it always relieved my fears to know that he was behind me. I slipped into the routine—and a rather superstitious habit.

At five fifty-five on each day—I was due on the air at six o'clock—I invariably visited the gents' toilets to wash my hands. And I made a point of using the same bowl—the third from the left.

Once someone was rinsing his hands there, but instead of using a vacant bowl I let a precious minute go by as I waited for him to finish. I have never known myself to show even vague signs of being superstitious, yet I felt that to use another bowl would mean a *faux pas* in the news reading!

Felt I Was Wasted

My heart was still in the *Billy Welcome* programmes and although I continued to dash about the country to keep the character going, I had an irresistible fear that my programmes were drifting away from me and that I was in fact being wasted on news reading.

Whatever stir it had caused, whatever thrill I had experienced after getting over that first difficult hurdle and the satisfaction I had got from the knowledge that I was doing the news reading reasonably well, I still felt I had done nothing to improve the existing team.

I indicated my point of view to John Snagge and made the suggestion that it might not be a bad thing if I were allowed to give up news reading and go back to Manchester and my programmes, and that Bruce Belfrage, who was reluctantly but efficiently carrying out the announcing job in the north, should be brought back to London in my place.

John readily agreed. He did more: he promised to secure my release, asking me not to say anything to the Press as "there could be a bit of trouble over it!" Most willingly I undertook to keep it dark.

Mabel was overjoyed to hear of our decision. She was bored with living in a London hotel and longed as I did for a bit of homeliness and neighbourliness.

One interesting point discovered by the research department was that my news reading was more popular in the south than in the north of England. I was stumped for an answer to that one, but having since gone over it fairly thoroughly, I have concluded that a contributory reason, at any rate, might be that folks in the north who have "got on" and moved to the most respectable districts or suburbs of their towns have fought against dialect, though they can't avoid speaking it themselves, even after conscious effort.

As they have progressed, the wife has started to speak with the accent of the B.B.C. news reader, doing her practice in front of a mirror in the bathroom and trying to say "bahth" and "pahth."

The children have been sent to the high school to learn to speak "more proper than we ever could." It was in such families that one might well have expected to hear a remark like this: "Here we are 'avin' got on and sent t'childer to a good school to teach 'em to speak proper an' then they put a fellow on t' wireless talkin' like this."

If We All Spoke Alike

While I have the greatest respect for the many achievements of the B.B.C. I believe they are guilty of the offence of trying to teach Great Britain to talk standard English. How terrible it is to think that we may some day lose that lovely soft Devonshire accent or the bluff and very wonderful Scots brogue or the amusing flatness and forthrightness of the north countryman's speech, or the music of the Welsh voice.

May it be forbidden that we should ever speak like B.B.C. announcers, for our rich contrast of voices is a vocal tapestry of great beauty and value, handed down to us by our forefathers.

I should be very happy if I could know now that when I die, a Yorkshireman will say: "He were a champion fella" and a Lancashire man will comment: "He wor a gradely mon." That would be praise indeed!

The north country dialects are forever being ridiculed, but if they go, much of our character goes too. The view that if a man speaks in a north country accent he must necessarily wear a cloth cap and keep a whippet under the table should be squashed; we must see to it that we don't speak in one language.

Here we are in a country flowing with folk songs, beautiful compositions that belong essentially to the people and which are sung by miners, railwaymen and housewives instead of professional singers. But the B.B.C. does nothing about them! Unless it gets out and about to record them pretty soon, they are going to die with this generation just as the Lancashire poetry has died.

It was with thoughts like these running through my mind that I waited with Mabel on a darkened platform crowded with soldiers, sailors and airmen, for the train to Manchester. The excitement about my news reading had died; my name had faded from the headlines just as completely as it had hit them only a few hectic weeks before, and we were leaving London almost by stealth, which contrasted sharply with our reception in the city.

As the train slid slowly and squeakily into platform fourteen I started gathering our bags together. Mabel pulled at my sleeve, pointed to the big suitcase, and winked. There, right on top, was her umbrella!

NEXT WEEK: I have to choose —big money or security

How a boy offender faces court. Last year under-seventeens did more than half all the "breaking and entering"

CRIME CATCHES THEM YOUNG

by EDWARD HOGARTH

From ten to twenty are the danger years. And the boy who falls usually comes from an unhappy home. He's small, underfed, backward, a misfit who feels inferior

"NOW, ARTHUR," says the Chairman of the Magistrates. "Tell us truthfully. Did you or did you not steal a bag of tools left in an unfinished house on the Parkfield Estate? Did you or did you not climb a ladder and throw the bag down to your friends who were waiting below?"

Arthur says nothing. He stares suspiciously and sullenly from under lowered brows. The three magistrates, grey-haired and elderly—one of them a woman—whisper and sigh.

"You must answer the Chairman's question," says the Clerk of the Court, sitting at the side of the table. He is younger, more vigorous, determined to stand no nonsense. "Did you or did you not take the tools?"

"I don't know what made me do it," Arthur mumbles, clenching and unclenching his hands nervously. "I've never been in trouble before. Please, sir, I meant to put them back."

Since he is a first offender, the magistrates will deal leniently with him, but they know from experience that a boy does not suddenly become a delinquent. Poor Arthur has obviously been in and out of trouble all his life. It is not the first time that he has done wrong. It is merely the first time that he has been caught.

The magistrates are not legal experts. They are local people, accustomed to public service, selected by the Home Office because of their special sympathies or experience with young people. They rely on the Clerk for advice on legal matters. Indeed, it is all they can do to prevent the Clerk from running the court and making up their minds for them.

Next comes an apparently trivial case. A small, mouse-like child called Raymond has helped himself to a dozen magazines in a newsagent's shop and given them to his friends.

A smile flickers on the face of the woman J.P. as a burly young constable in grey pin-stripes solemnly places before the Chairman three brightly coloured papers, *Mickey Mouse*, *The Beano* and *The Hotspur*. He found them in a drain-pipe.

The Clerk soon drives home the seriousness of the situation. Raymond is already on probation and this is a blot on his record. He has already met these same magistrates on four other occasions.

The Probation Officer steps up to the table, holding a sheaf of papers. She is an earnest young woman in a neat suit and green velvet beret. Passionately she pleads for Raymond to be given yet another chance. The magistrates listen attentively.

She is the expert on the practical side and what she says carries weight. If she feels that she can save the child, the magistrates are glad to give her the opportunity.

In juvenile courts all over the country, magistrates are trying to find a cure for the wave of petty thieving among children. Last year the under-seventeens committed one-third of the total larceny offences and more than half the breaking and entering offences.

They stole from open counters in big stores. They stole from market stalls and unattended cars. They stole spare parts for their bicycles. They broke into tobacconists' shops, uprooted plants from municipal parks, even removed bottles of milk from the doorsteps of late risers.

As many as 27,650 children under seventeen were found guilty of larceny.

From the total number of people of all ages found guilty of breaking and entering, 16,147 were under twenty-one. Only 7,317 were adults. And of the juveniles, 7,696 were children under fourteen.

More Than Naughtiness

High as these figures are, they represent only "indictable"—or very serious—offences. Of the "non-indictable" offences, which include malicious damage, pedal-cycle cases, "nuisances in highways," trespassing, and minor cases of stealing, 27,435 of all persons found guilty were boys and girls under seventeen.

There are signs that this year's figures for adult crime will be slightly lower than those of 1948, and magistrates are hoping that the figures for juvenile delinquency will also be reduced. But, so far, little improvement has taken place. Almost every week we read accounts not only of petty thieving and wanton damage, but of offences which go far beyond the range of childish naughtiness.

In Coventry, where the magistrates are trying to cope with the highest delinquency rates in the country, gangs of boys have been "endangering the lives of railway passengers" by altering signals and hurling missiles at carriage windows. Not content with this, they have been "unnerving" the engine drivers by lying between the rails while trains pass over them.

Attempted Murder

In the same town, a thirteen-year-old boy, small, bespectacled and inoffensive-looking, has been up before the City Magistrates on a charge of attempted murder. He was accused of fracturing the skull of a blind and deaf old woman shopkeeper.

In Swansea, a boy of twelve has recently been charged with the manslaughter of a four-year-old child, due to throwing stones at him "with exceptional ferocity." In Bedworth, two little boys, aged seven and ten, have shot a fifteen-year-old friend during a game of cowboys and cattle rustlers. They wheeled the boy's body home to his parents in a perambulator.

Why, in the name of sanity, must children do these things?

"Is this the boy?" asks the woman J.P. as a small angelic-looking child enters the court, golden haired, with

Posed picture shows boy who didn't get away with it this time. Now what does Society do with him?

large, vacant blue eyes. "Isn't there some mistake? Are you sure he is old enough to be here?" David is charged with setting fire to an oat rick.

"His looks are deceptive," says the Clerk, shortly. "He's turned eleven. He has already committed five offences. This is the sixth. What's more, in the period between the serving of the summons and his appearance today in court, he has committed a seventh." A murmur of dismay goes up from the magistrates.

"Approved school," mutters the Chairman. "It's his only chance. A complete change of surroundings."

If the boy had been as young as he looked he would not have been brought into court. Acording to law, a person under eight years of age is incapable of committing an offence.

But the joke about the small boy who robbed a barrow and then taunted the policeman with: "You can't touch me. I'm under age," has a ring of truth. A child may be young in years, but old in malice.

Delinquents run to pattern. In magistrates' courts up and down the country you meet the same recognizable types, and listen to the same identical details over and over again.

The broken home, the parents dead, divorced, separated or living a cat-and-dog existence . . . the irregular uncle living with the child's mother . . . the step-parents who "have no time" for the unfortunate boy . . . the father who drinks . . . the interfering relatives who live in the already overcrowded house.

Seldom is the delinquent a boy who is loved and cherished. He is usually illegitimate like Arthur, or unwanted like Raymond—cast off to fend for himself.

In case after case the lad in trouble is one of a large family, often the eldest, but seldom the youngest. He has at least four brothers and sisters, one of whom has appeared in court as a law breaker. The father, or the supporter of the household, belongs to the lower income group of wage earners.

Just A Little Coward

It is rare to see a sturdy, well-built, decent-looking boy in court. The delinquent is undernourished and undersized. Seldom daring, seldom bold and adventurous, he is more often furtive and cowardly.

He is very likely to possess some physical defect such as a squint, weak eyesight, a limp, or any peculiarity which singles him out and makes him feel inferior or "different."

He lives in a big town—country boys do not usually find their way into the courts—he goes to school in a pseudo-Gothic building a hundred years out of date, with inadequate sanitation and ill-swept classrooms packed with children. His attendance is irregular.

He is backward at his lessons, a sneak rather than a bully, an unhappy misfit who is a constant thorn in the flesh to his teachers. Providence sees to it that our young delinquents are not, in addition, highly intelligent. Heaven help us if our bright boys should turn to crime!

But the biggest headache for the magistrates is the delinquent with some inherent mental weakness, some flaw or lack of moral sense. He is not always responsible for his actions.

What can be done to halt this flood of child crime? Does the cause lie within the individual or is it brought about by bad environment? Countless reasons are brought forward, from lack of corporal punishment in schools to the leniency of magistrates, from mothers in the factories to the break-up of family life, from the lowering of moral standards to the decline in religious beliefs.

War, Cinema Or Slums?

"I blame the war," says the woman J.P. "If we lose our respect for human life and property young people do the same."

"I blame the cinema," says another magistrate. "I don't say that children get criminal ideas from the films, but they see too much brutality, too much sadism and callousness."

"I blame the housing shortage," says the Probation Officer. "The bombed cities, with families living in crowded conditions, are the black spots for delinquency. Look at Coventry and Leicester, towns of roughly the same population. One was blitzed, the other escaped, and there's twice the amount of delinquency in Coventry."

"Children need models," says the Chairman. "Not critics. Someone on whom they can base their pattern of behaviour. But today they have no one to inspire them.

"We don't have many girls to deal with," he adds. "We've quite enough on our hands as it is. Occasionally we get a girl brought before us as 'beyond control.' Running round the streets. Staying out late.

"No, the actual number of girl delinquents is very low. Girls don't smash windows and break into buildings. They don't go in for violence. Their reaction, when circumstances get too much for them, is to run away from home, go in for sex experience or do a bit of shop lifting."

"In another twenty years' time," puts in the Clerk, "sociologists will see nothing remarkable in our child crime figures. Many of our younger delinquents were born during the war years. Low diet, air raids, evacuation and the general feeling of tension are bound to have an ill effect on a child."

It's Mostly Sheer Greed

Who is right? The answer is, perhaps, that there is no specific cause for delinquency, only predisposing factors.

The steep rise in juvenile offences at the age of thirteen and fourteen is not entirely due to an upsurging spirit of adventure. Sheer greed lies at the bottom of most thefts.

On starting work a boy's first earnings seem like untold wealth. Then he develops a taste for fancy ties, gaudy American-style clothes and special brilliantines. He dreams of owning a motor-bike.

He has an overwhelming desire to show off to the girls. He has never learnt how to go without and so he becomes a petty thief. He joins a gang of similarly placed young desperadoes.

That is what has happened to Harry. He has been hanging round the all-night cafés, picking up with lorry drivers, and now he is in court facing a charge of receiving goods knowing them to have been stolen.

His girl friend from the milk bar would have reaped the benefit, but the police were too smart. And now Harry stands before the magistrates trying to bluff it out. The Chairman peers at him sadly over his spectacles and strokes his thin white hair. How can they make Harry realize that he has done wrong?

They can "bind him over," they can fine him—but his father will do the paying—they can put him on probation, they can send him to an approved school. Which will be the best way of instilling a sense of moral values into a self-indulgent youth?

Welfare, education, training, desirable surroundings—how many children today lack one or all of these essentials? It says much for the basic soundness of British character that the delinquency rates are not higher.

"In the last ten years," says the Chairman, "the whole pattern of life has changed. The world of childhood has ceased to exist. The child today lives in an adult world, sees sights fit only for adult eyes.

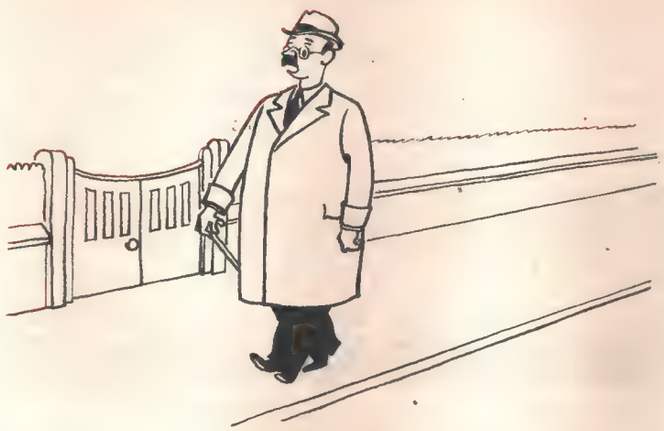
"We don't give him time to grow up gradually. We forget that a child's brain is incapable of dealing with grown-up worries. And then we wonder why he breaks down under the strain."

But the situation is not as hopeless as it appears. The fact that the figures for child crime are proportionately higher than for adult crime is not necessarily a bad sign. It means that the present methods of treatment—reform rather than punishment—are achieving some success.

Law-breaking presents itself in its most attractive light to the young, not to the middle-aged. If, at any period in a person's lifetime, he is brought before the "beaks" the chances are that he is between the ages of ten and twenty.

These are the dangerous years. There is a marked falling-off in the incidence of crime between the ages of twenty-one and thirty and a further decrease every year until, at the age of sixty, only incorrigible rogues find themselves in trouble.

We can assume, then, that if a boy is honest during childhood and adolescence and reaches the age of twenty-one without breaking the law, he will remain a respectable citizen.



"Have you noticed what a habit talking to one's self has become with people these days?"

Continuing John Bull's serial by a master of mystery

HANGOVER HOUSE

by SAX ROHMER

ILLUSTRATED BY SEABRIGHT

With the news of Sidonia's escape, Kennedy's hopes rose. Had his red herring diverted suspicion to the real culprit? Then came a new, fantastic development

WHO HAD DROPPED the mysterious gold object, shaped like a pencil, stolen from the effects of the stabbed man? It was a question Storm Kennedy hardly dared to ask himself, for it seemed to him that Hilary Bruton was in some way involved in the mystery of the body found in the grounds of Hangover House.

Kennedy had been talking to Hilary that morning in the summer-house; she had dropped her bag, and it was afterwards, when she had gone in for police interrogation, that Kennedy had found the gold object under the seat.

Now, after he had been searched, he knew that the object had been stolen from the bedside table alongside the body.

Someone had unlocked that room under the noses of Inspector McGraw and Sergeant Sample of Scotland Yard.

It was just one question mark of a whole series for Kennedy. A private detective, he had been assigned by Lord Glengale, Hilary's father—who feared that she was being blackmailed—to protect her.

Learning that Hilary and her aunt, "Elfie" Elphinstowe, were going to an all-night party at Hangover House—a party to which he himself had been invited—Kennedy had followed them. The house was fog-bound, and it was late when he arrived.

Soon after, the stabbed man had been found.

Most of the guests had already left, but those remaining were forbidden to leave.

They were: Hilary, Elfie, Kennedy, Larkhall Pike (the occupier, who let out the house for parties), Sidonia (a dance band singer), Mrs. Muller (a beautiful foreigner), Peter Faraway (husband of the hostess), Mohammed (a mysterious Egyptian who seemed to have special knowledge of the guests' secrets), and Allen Lovelace, a song-writer. They all denied knowledge of the identity of the stabbed man.

After her interrogation, Sidonia decided to go for a walk in the grounds. Taking an overgrown path, she wandered from the house, to the far wall. Suddenly, she stopped. Someone had called her name. Peering through the undergrowth, she saw the face of a man through an opening in the wall.

PART VI

Calling Sidonia!

IN that cell-like room which contained, in addition to Larkhall Pike's wardrobe, the body of the murdered man, Sergeant Sample laid down on the window ledge a strong lens through which he had been peering.

"An old hand, at a pinch, will sometimes use a rag or handkerchief," he remarked, "so as to leave no prints. That's what this looks like. Not very helpful."

Constable Wilson agreed. McGraw merely grunted and went downstairs into the curtained study. When Sample joined him:

"Wilson can go, now," McGraw said. "Tell him to leave the charts upstairs. May want 'em. But I'm inclined to think we shan't solve this puzzle along that line."

When Wilson had left, McGraw began to walk about the room.

"There's nobody in this house with an alibi that couldn't be broken," he declared. "But while we don't know the dead man's name, we can't begin to look for a motive. There are three queries. . . . First, there's the unexplained incident of the lamp. That floor lamp is controlled from a point beside the window. Everybody, so far, has looked for a stud or chain. If we could find a witness who knew where to switch it on, that witness would be the party who had switched it off. Call this query A. Clear?"

"Quite clear, sir."

"We should have told 'em all, 'Go home,' and had suspects shadowed, except for query A and another query. D'you know what that is?"

"Yes," said Sample. "The business with the gold case. Query: Is the party still on the premises?"

McGraw said: "It looks like the Bruton girl. But we want to be fool-proof before we tackle her. Go and find that song bird, Sidonia. She *might* have dropped the thing."

Sample nodded.

Ten minutes later the storm broke. Sidonia could not be found!

STORM KENNEDY, having left Larkhall Pike among his chickens, returned along a rough path, made nearly impenetrable by rank undergrowth, which probably led to some point below the terrace.

It did.

He found himself right down at the back of the summer-house, and pulled up sharply. . . .

Even now, Hilary's fingerprints might have been found on the gold case! Even now, a police sergeant could be on his way to call her back for further interrogation!

He saw her from where he stood.

There was a teak bench placed under a laburnum on the far side of the pond. Hilary and Elfie sat there.

Kennedy clenched his teeth—then stepped out on to the slope and began to walk down towards them.

He had gone no more than ten paces, when:

"Hi! Bill!" came a hail from behind.

Kennedy stopped, turned. Peter Faraway was approaching at speed, a strange figure in his tail coat, a muffler around his neck.

"What's up, Peter?"

Peter, rather breathless, haggard and unshaven, joined him.

"I say—have you seen Sidonia? The police want her. That cove Hawley got hold of me and asked where she was. I said I didn't know. I've been hunting all over the place."

Kennedy glanced, once, towards the yet distant pond, and then resigned himself. His only consolation lay in recognition of the fact that his red herring had proved so effective.

"She can't have found any more steps to fall down, Peter! Who saw her last?"

"Mrs. Muller and that queer bird Lovelace. After we'd been searched (don't know why) and the copper said we could go out, she told them she was taking a stroll in the garden."

"And did she?"

"They say, yes. They also say her manner was queer."

"Well—" Kennedy inhaled deeply—"Hilary and Miss Elphinstowe are down there by the pond. I might ask them if they have seen her." A sudden idea flashed through his mind. "By the way, Peter, you remember I dragged you off from Superintendent Croker last night and warned you not to mention Hilary's name?"

"Certainly I remember."

"And you didn't?"

"Not to a soul."

Kennedy sighed with relief. It was a small point; but he might now assume that nothing in Peter's evidence had cast suspicion upon Hilary.

"All right. Let's go and ask them. . . . Hallo! The coppers are ahead of us!"

Both stared in the direction of the pond.

Inspector Hawley had appeared there. He was evidently talking to the two women, but, as he talked, his glance swept the prospect.

"They can't find her, Bill! I must think. . . ."

But Storm Kennedy was thinking, too, and thinking hard.

The mere facts that Hilary had known the stabbed man, had come secretly to Hangover House to meet him, had left him a few minutes prior to his fate, might very well explain her behaviour both before and after his body was discovered.

Sidonia's account of the incidents of the night could very well be a fabric of lies, her drunkenness feigned. She was tough as the Lord makes them, and by no means unclever. So far as he knew (and upon this point he would ask McGraw to show him any additional evidence the police might have) there was nothing to prove that Sidonia had not committed the murder!

If, as appeared to be the case, she had made a getaway, her reason for doing so was obvious.

The evidence stolen from beside the dead man had been in her handbag and not in Hilary's. The blonde had only just learned that it was missing!

It was a theory to make him drunk with hope.

Had his red herring accidentally led the pack to the real fox?

While Kennedy was ruminating, the two women were sitting by the weed-covered pond. "I'm further than ever, Elfie, from knowing what to do."

Hilary's soft voice held a note of sheer despair.

She and Elfie sat on the teak bench, watching a dragon-fly like an emerald tie-pin darting over nearly invisible water.

Miss Elphinstowe raised her head and stared up the slope. Peter and Storm Kennedy, with Inspector Hawley, were walking back towards the house.

"Bill Kennedy wanted to talk to you. He didn't get a chance."

"I know." Hilary nodded unhappily. "I wanted to talk to *him*."

Elfie glanced aside.

"Have you made up your mind yet to tell him?"

Hilary grasped her hand. Hilary's palm was dry and hot.

"Oh, Elfie! It's the most frightful thing I have ever tried to do! I told you I got as far as admitting that we—knew one another; that I had lied about it. Even to tell him that much nearly killed me. Those steady blue eyes look as though nothing would hurt them so much as hypocrisy. Then I said (he asked me) that I had just left—the man I came to meet—when you both saw me running out of that room."

"But you mentioned nobody's name?"

"No. He said he would rather not know the name. You see why? He didn't want to have to lie about it. I know there's something — something urgent—he's anxious to tell me, or to ask me."

"He probably knows that McGraw, that sleepy Scotland Yard lad who's very wide awake, has found out who you are."

"He's sure to have found out, Elfie. Peter would have given it away, quite innocently. What terrifies me is that we haven't been questioned yet. As far as I can make out, everybody else has had an interview. Oh, Elfie dear! It's an awful situation!"

ELFIE agreed gruffly: "It is awful. Our deception might have worked if this gimlet-eyed C.I.D. lad hadn't come on the scene. It will never work with *him*. The pair of us will be given a free ride in a black maria to Brixton Prison."

"Elfie, don't!"

"I believe they feed 'em better nowadays. And I'm starving for a square meal, however plain."

"You're a wonderful pal, Elfie. I could kick myself for dragging you into this thing."

"We couldn't foresee how it was going to end, dear. Yet, that Egyptian lunatic certainly warned me, earlier on. He advised me, most earnestly, to go home. His actual words were 'Fly from this evil house.'"

"Whatever did you say?"

"I offered him ten shillings. He returned it with a pound note of his

The apparition began to stagger down. His face was the colour of dirty chalk, his eyes blazed feverishly. "La . . ." he whispered. "It was La . . ."

own, and requested me very sweetly to send both to the Red Cross."

Hilary clasped her hands between her knees, a characteristic pose, and stared down at rank grass growing around the bench.

"I am afraid of that man," she said in a low voice. "I feel he knows the truth about everything that happened last night."

"Certainly a bit of a mystery," Elfie agreed. "I suppose he's one of Joan Faraway's discoveries. But as Joan pushed off without as much as a sailor's farewell I hadn't a chance to ask her."

"She was furious about Peter and that singing woman."

"H'm. It now appears that the singing woman has taken French leave. Though how on earth she got out beats me."

They were silent for a long time, Hilary staring down abstractedly, and Elfie watching a swift activity break upon this formerly drowsy scene. The early morning breeze had almost died away and the day promised to be warm. Police were moving all about the grounds, exploring bypaths and peering into thickets. The sudden racket of a motor cycle marked the progress of a dispatch rider along that narrow lane which came out near the back gate.

But Hilary never looked up.

"Elfie," she said, at last, "when the time comes I suppose I shall have to make a clean breast of it."

Elfie put her arm around the bowed shoulders.

"We shall have no choice, my dear. This is where we face the music——"

"Elfie! I feel so ashamed, I hate my cowardly soul for bringing this—this humiliating thing upon *you*! I don't believe you ever told a lie in your life, until you got mixed up in my rotten affairs! Elfie, darling! I can never forgive myself!"

"Shut up! Or you'll get a bang on the head!"

"It seems to be my fate to do things to make the people I love most—despise me. I had to hide from father when he called. I just couldn't meet him. Only because I know how dead straight he is. Sometimes I have been ashamed to look you in the face. And now——"

"And now there's another angel joined the shining ranks—Bill Kennedy. Tell me you're ashamed to look Bill in the face and I'll really lose my wool! Listen, Larry (I only call you Larry when I'm angry—it's what *he* used to call you) you have been a heaven-inspired little idiot, and your own enemy. You have done the maddest things. You're as passionately wayward as a young mule, and now you have run into a stone wall."

Hilary raised tearless grey eyes to the older woman. "Elfie—what shall I do?"

"No need to ask *me*. And don't talk rot about your cowardly soul. You fell in love with Bill Kennedy the first day you met him, and he's in love with you. I know you, my dear. So I know what you'll do. You will tell him the truth. You wouldn't have an hour's peace of mind until he knew it. You'd rather lose him."

Hilary's chin was firm as she looked up the sloping wilderness towards Hangover House.

"Do you think I shall be arrested?" she asked quietly.

"It's not impossible. I shall ask for an adjoining cell. . . ."

MEANWHILE, Storm Kennedy was talking to Inspector Hawley. "All surrounding stations notified," said Hawley, sadly. "I don't think a woman wearing full evening dress and a sable cape has much chance of getting through."

McGraw came out of a room. He turned to Kennedy. "It looks as though you had something there. If Sidonia is in on this thing she has a hundred per cent more savvy than I thought."

Storm Kennedy smiled.

"Has she left her autograph on the gold case?" The reply was important to him.

"She has not. It had been handled by someone experienced enough to use a handkerchief or something of the sort. And we know nothing of this vocalist's background. Do you?"

"Less than nothing." Kennedy relaxed. Hilary's fingerprints were *not* there!

"Have you opened the case?"

McGraw chewed reflectively. "I'm going to ask *you* to try, presently. Meanwhile, we've sent to King's Riding for an alleged expert. If all else fails, we must smash it. Where's Mr. Pike?"

They had been walking towards the panelled hall. Now, they entered it—and Larkhall Pike confronted them. A police sergeant stood beside him. The major was bristling with anger. He could hardly keep still.

"It seems, Chief Inspector," he snarled, "that even at my Spartan meals I must be interrupted. I have never used influence to further my fortunes. If I had, I might be better off. But I have some slight acquaintance with the present Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, and, by God, sir!—he shall hear of this!"

Even the imperturbable McGraw found himself temporarily silenced. Through the scarecrow outfit of pyjamas and rusty dressing-gown, the major's ferocious truculence shone. But Storm

Continued on page 25

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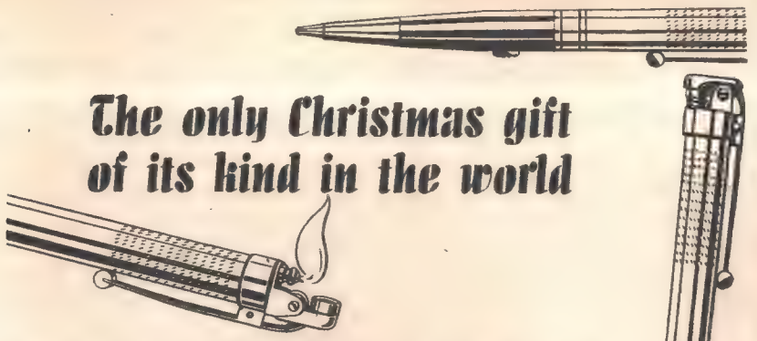

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I'm a specialist in selfishness

by **HERBERT HODGE**

A WOMAN READER ASKS me to write something about selfishness. I feel she couldn't have come to a better person. If there's one thing every woman who's ever known me has agreed upon, it's the fact that I'm selfish—selfish to the core. So I think I'm entitled to call myself a specialist on the subject.

Only the other day, I was standing in our front garden when I saw a hat going by in the road. I supposed there was a man underneath it, since it was a man's hat; though all I could see over the top of the hedge was the hat itself—a quite ordinary though rather old-fashioned grey trilby. And, for some unknown reason, I couldn't take my eyes off it.

As I watched it bobbing up and down—jogging farther and farther away up the road—it seemed to be sending out telepathic signals. It seemed to be silently calling out to me—imploring me to come to the rescue before it was too late.

Went To The Wardrobe

A ridiculous feeling. Yet there it was. I stood there watching that old grey trilby until it bobbed away up the road out of sight.

Then I went indoors—feeling as if I'd failed an old friend in his hour of need.

I sat down and tried to work. But I couldn't get the wistful look of that hat out of my head. Suddenly, an awful thought occurred to me. I went to the wardrobe, and looked on the top shelf. Then I sought out the lady in charge.

The sight of my face set her laughing almost before I could speak. "I never thought you'd recognize it," she said, wiping her eyes. "After all, you haven't worn it for ten years. And if you'd seen the one that poor man was wearing. . . ."

"But for a chap to stand and watch his own hat walking off up the road!" I said. "Going out of his life for ever—without one last word! You women don't realize how a man——"

But that was as far as I got. And, after that, the conversation ceased to be funny. It ended as these domestic conversations usually end—with me sitting solitary in my room, swamped in shame; the shame of being *the* most selfish man on earth.

Wrote A Book About It

Not that this is any longer news to me. We all have to face the worst about ourselves sooner or later. I like to do it sooner—so as to get it over. The sooner you know the worst about yourself, the sooner you can start trying to make the best of it.

My own idea of making the best of myself was to sit down, some years ago, and write a book—a book to prove that other people were just as selfish as I was; and that every so-called "unselfish" action had a selfish motive.

I worked for nearly three years on this book—giving it every moment I could spare from driving my cab. I made a list of every so-called noble feeling I could think of—every "good" emotion, every form of "love"—and I analysed them all until I'd found the selfish root.

I showed up everything and everybody. It was going to be the book of the century.

Doled Out Two Shillings

I could tell you a lot more about it if I could find the book. But I can't be bothered now. It's somewhere down at the bottom of my manuscript cupboard, probably turning yellow with age. I never offered it to a publisher. I didn't even get it typed.

The reason was that one night I gave a man two shillings—two shillings I couldn't afford. It was back in the hard times, in the thirties, and I'd only earned eight bob that night with the cab.

Besides, the man had only asked me for tuppence.

When I gave him two shillings (so as he could get a bed for the night, as well as a cup of coffee) he began to cry. And, for once in my life, I nearly cried, too. It was all very sad—and very beautiful at the same time.

Walking home from the cab-garage in the early hours of the morning—minus those two precious shillings—I started wondering why I'd done it. Did this fit my theory that all human actions were selfish? Finally, I decided it did.

Greater Than Ourselves

I'd given that chap those two shillings, not to relieve *his* pain, but to relieve my own—because, having met and talked with him, I could feel his pain in myself. Once his pain had entered into me, I could only ease myself by first easing him.

So, at root, my action had been solely selfish.

But then I realized I'd left something out; something I'd left out of my book, too. I'd left out the power of the human imagination—the sympathetic imagination which enables us to feel the pain (and the joy) of others in ourselves, and which turns our instinctive selfishness towards a purpose greater than ourselves.

So I felt it was time I stopped analysing other people's selfishness and started developing my own sympathetic imagination.

I've been *trying* to do it ever since.

HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 22

Kennedy saw an opening for soothing treatment—and for a hint to McGraw.

"I didn't know we had a mutual ally in Sir John." He smiled at Pike. It was a smile hard to resist. "The Commissioner is an old friend of my father's."

"Indeed, Mr. Kennedy?" Larkhall Pike swallowed as though he had a sore throat. "We were formerly brother officers. He went up, and I went down. Eggs are scarce in this Merrie England today, but perhaps I may venture to defy the Food Ministry and boil two more." He glared at McGraw. "What do you want, sir?"

The chief inspector glanced aside at Storm Kennedy. He had not missed the implication which lay in that word "ally."

"I want you to be good enough to tell me how an important witness has disappeared, although all exits were guarded. Is there some other way out?"

"There are walls. Men, as well as monkeys, have been known to climb them. Foxes penetrate occasionally at other points, through gaps in the netting. But if you say you have constables posted at both ends of Hangover Lane, I assume your missing witness would have been challenged."

McGraw nodded.

"What about the south side?"

"On the south the ground adjoins the property of Sir Nicholas Porter. It was formerly part of the Hangover estate. The boundary is a barbed wire entanglement in a deep ditch. Sir Nicholas and I are not on speaking terms. The man is a vulgar city upstart."

"I've had that side thoroughly examined, Chief Inspector," said Hawley. "It's as Mr. Pike says—impassable."

"Take the north side," McGraw pronounced. "Thank you for your co-operation, Mr. Pike."

THE party of three (Storm Kennedy had attached himself, uninvited) went out across the courtyard to the entrance gates. McGraw signalled for the gates to be unlocked and as this was done the trio became surrounded by waiting reporters. Cars choked the lane. Cameras clicked. Notebooks appeared.

"Nothing for you, boys," drawled the chief inspector. "So don't bother me. When I'm ready to talk I'll say so." He set out with long, springy strides.

As they walked along the lane—and it was necessary to walk fast in order to keep up with the long-legged McGraw—Kennedy was thinking hard. He had recognized the fact that they were proceeding parallel with that tangled path on the other side of the wall which he had explored earlier.

A few minutes' walking (as McGraw walked) brought them to a point where the wall was partly broken. "Look!" said Hawley. "The ground is soft, and there are clear tyre marks. A car has stood here, close up to the wall, and not so long ago."

"I think I can give you the time, approximately," Kennedy volunteered. "Remember asking me to go and talk to Mr. Pike? Well—as I was on my way to look for him I heard a car being driven, very cautiously, along this lane. I thought nothing of it then, but I see, now, that it may have been important."

McGraw's eyes were lowered as he consulted his wrist-watch.

"Give me a hand up," he said to Hawley, and indicated the gap.

Hawley and Storm Kennedy shared the lift, until the chief inspector knelt in the jagged opening, his head moving right and left.

A few moments only he remained there, then rose upright, turned and jumped down.

"Fallen blocks on the other side. Someone strong enough could have hauled her up all right."

"Probably stood on the roof of his car," Kennedy suggested.

McGraw stared at tyre marks in the lush grass, then looked at Kennedy.

"Which way was the car going?"

Storm Kennedy hesitated.

"Hard to say. My impression was—this way."

He pointed west.

McGraw's half-opened eyes were turned towards Hawley.

"Same man on duty at the back gate?"

"Yes." Hawley nodded. "Been on since seven this morning."

"Better talk to him."

They proceeded. And a few minutes later came in sight of the back gate, where a constable whom Kennedy recognized as the man who had spoken to him earlier stood beside an Austin Seven.

He saluted Inspector Hawley. But it was McGraw who spoke.

"A car came down Hangover Lane at about eleven ten this morning. Must have passed you. What were your orders?"

The constable, a good looking young Irishman, glanced once at Hawley and then answered nervously:

"The inspector's orders were, sir, to challenge anyone trying to leave the grounds or coming down the lane."

"You remember the car I mean?"

"Yes, sir. An old Buick."

"Who was driving?"

"A newspaperman, sir. He showed me his Press pass. He said he couldn't get into Hangover House and was trying to find the nearest call-box to report to his paper."

"Name?"

The constable produced a small note-book. "James Findlater, of the *Evening Herald*."

"Anybody with him?"

The constable frowned thoughtfully.

"Well, nobody on the front seat, sir, and nobody in the back, except——"

"Except what?"

"I remember there was a dark overcoat, or that's what it looked like, lying piled up on the floor. I'll admit I didn't give it any particular attention."

But McGraw was already walking swiftly away. . . .

"I think I still prefer the round one..."

ON a seat under a hawthorn tree, Mrs. Muller and Lovelace were talking. Mrs. Muller had draped her wrap behind her. She now reclined against it, one ivory arm extended along the back of the seat, her long, dark eyes half closed in resignation. Lovelace's glance lingered for a moment on slim jewelled fingers and then returned to her face.

"You see—er—you're so wonderful. You seem to be all the beautiful women of poetry—er—in one, as it were. So I know you will understand if I tell you that *I* am two persons, as well."

It was not crystal clear, but Mrs. Muller said nothing.

"Poetry, and—er—music, don't pay awfully well, you know. A man has to—er—find some other job to keep him going."

"What a pity," she murmured, and flicked ash from her cigarette.

"Yes—it is a pity——"

Mr. Lovelace became suddenly silent. A change had crept over Mrs. Muller's face.

She was staring past him, as if at once fascinated and repelled—and her gaze rested on the opening in the yew hedge. Lovelace turned, peering in the same direction.

Mohammed Ibn Lahûn stood there, placidly watching them. Finding himself to be observed, he bowed in his ceremonious manner and was gone as silently as he had come.

"That man frightens me, for some reason." Mrs. Muller's husky voice was low pitched. "Don't leave me alone with him, Mr.——"

"Allen——"

"Allen. . . . He spoke to me last night, just before—I had to go and look at the body. I felt as though I lay naked on a dissecting table."

"I'm—er—terribly sorry he upsets you. Rather a fishy character, in my opinion."

Voices became audible beyond the yew hedge. One, the softly musical voice of Mohammed, the other that flat monotone which characterized Sergeant Sample. A moment later, the sergeant stepped through the opening.

"I've been looking for *you*," he announced.

His remark was addressed to Mr. Lovelace, who sprang nervously to his feet.

"Oh—well, I'm here."

"Better come along. The chief inspector is waiting."

Mr. Lovelace went.

Mrs. Muller watched the two until they became swallowed up by the gap in the tall hedge.

They had disappeared for no more than a few seconds when Mohammed walked through. Mrs. Muller sat quite still. He crossed to her, slowly, his gait graceful and leisurely.

"I have returned, Mrs. Muller," he said, the soft eyes gentle but compelling, "to speak to you in friendship. There are matters upon which I may be able to advise you. . . ."

The phone in Larkhall Pike's study had become a busy line.

James Findlater, it seemed, really was attached to the *Evening Herald*. News-hungry reporters outside the locked gates all knew him, knew his old Buick. Two of them had seen him slip away and drive along the nearly impracticable lane. He was said to be brilliant, but a heavy drinker.

An alert was flashed to all points north, south, east and west of Hangover House.

Sidonia, according to the entertainment department of Jarrett's, had recently been employed by Sammy Sams's Rhythm Seven as a vocalist. They believed her to be American. Mr. Sams, who might know more about her, couldn't be located. His band, with Sidonia, was programmed by the B.B.C. to broadcast at two thirty that afternoon.

MEANWHILE, Mr. Lovelace's fate hung in the balance. He sat, uncomfortably, on the extreme edge of a chair set before the desk in Larkhall Pike's study. McGraw watched him across the desk. Sergeant Sample watched him over McGraw's shoulder.

There had been some conversation, and now an uneasy silence had fallen. Presently:

"You're satisfied you didn't turn the light out?" McGraw drawled. "Query A remains unanswered, Sergeant. But, before you go there are one or two points to clear up. You described yourself to Superintendent Croker as a lyric writer and composer. Correct?"

"Quite correct. Er—certainly."

"Professional?"

"Well—er—I've been published."

"Any titles you could mention?" Sample intoned.

"Titles? Yes. Mrs. Muller was playing a published song of mine last night—after the band had gone: 'Summer is Winter When You're Not Around.'"

"Good title," McGraw pronounced. His eyes were closed. "Very good. But the first point I should like to clear up is why you didn't give your real name to the superintendent."

"Perhaps," Sample interjected, "you know the penalty for obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty?"

Mr. Lovelace was mauling the relics of a white tie. His pale face looked damp; so did the pebble lenses of his spectacles. His winged collar had given the whole thing up as useless.

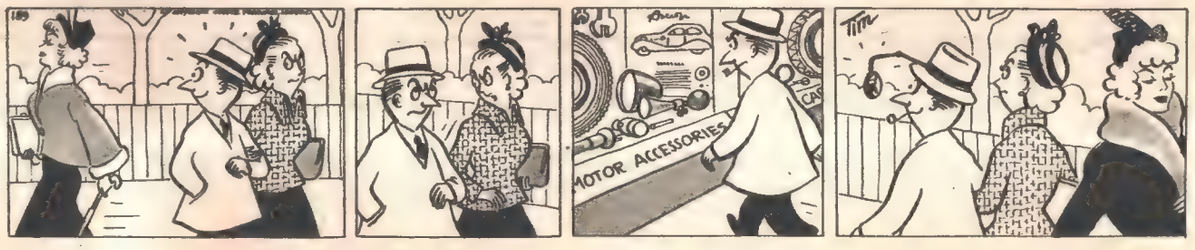
"Er—if I may say something. . . . I came in to—er—try to explain what happened. I intended to make my own position clear. But—er—you took me up on other things." He delved in a pocket of his tail coat and produced a sheet of music. "I am known—er—professionally, as Allen Lovelace. I always think of myself as Allen Lovelace."

He offered the item to Chief Inspector

Continued on page 27

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



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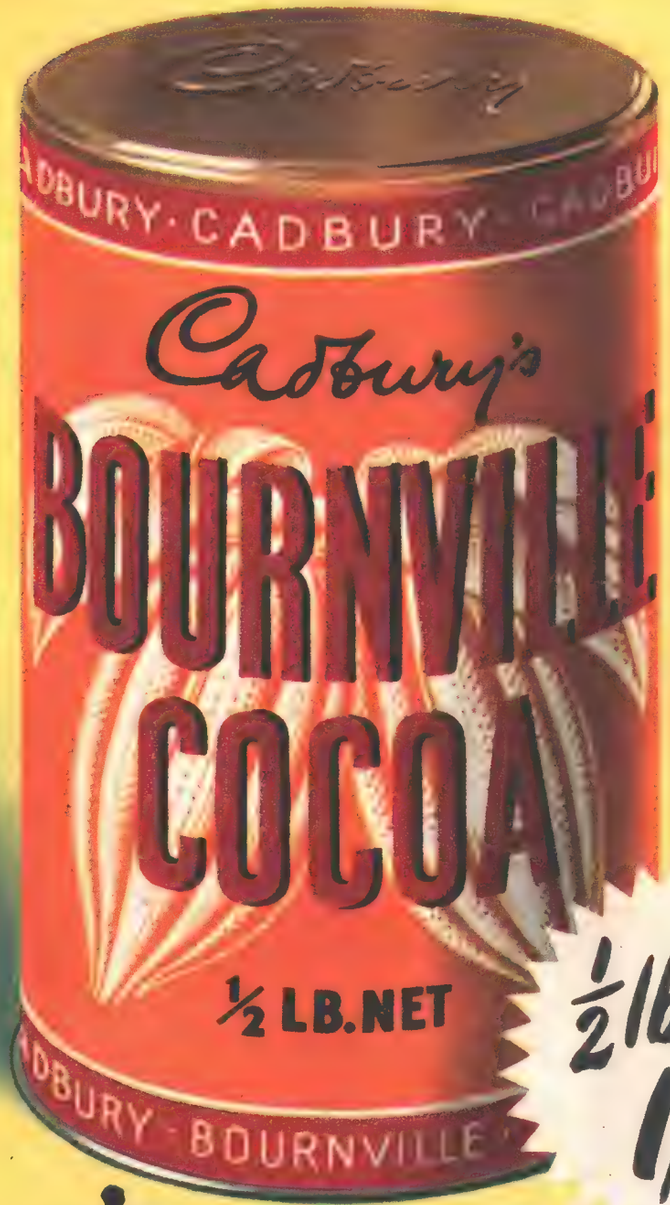

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Growing families have the cocoa habit

HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 25

McGraw. But Chief Inspector McGraw's eyes remained closed. The offering was ignored.

"Is that so?" McGraw murmured. "But according to your charge sheet, or inventory of fittings and refreshments provided, or whatever it's called, Jarrett's think of you as Percy Bailey. Correct?"

Sergeant Sample passed a black-bound book across the desk to Mr. Lovelace.

"Your property. We've done with it."

Mr. Lovelace accepted the book and put it in his pocket.

"It's quite clear to me what happened," McGraw continued, without troubling to open his eyes. "You fell hard for Mrs. Muller. I'm not blaming you. Attractive woman. You didn't want to blow your prospects sky high by telling her you were the man from Jarrett's. You said your name was Lovelace. Had to stick to it."

"Just so, Inspector. Just so."

McGraw nodded.

"We've checked up on you with your firm. Explained your absence is not your own fault. Got a car outside, haven't you?"

"Yes—yes, I have."

McGraw opened the fawn eyes and looked fixedly at Mr. Bailey. Then he spoke again.

"Beat it!"

STORM KENNEDY stood in the courtyard, wondering what had become of Mr. Lovelace's Morris, when the ambulance was driven in. Two men jumped down and dragged a stretcher from inside.

He turned and went in. The absence of Hilary and Elfie began to puzzle him. In the lobby he almost collided with Sergeant Sample, hurrying out.

"Just a moment, Mr. Kennedy. You're wanted."

Kennedy halted. Sample stopped the men with the stretcher.

"Stand by. Body to be moved later. Wait for the chief inspector's orders."

"What's happening, Sergeant?" Kennedy asked, as Sample rejoined him.

"Conference. We don't want to be interrupted. This way."

As always, the panelled hall, scene of last night's revelry, was deserted. Here, once, cavaliers and their lady loves had paced the stately minuet. Here, more recently, their descendants who still had the heart and the means to play among the ruins had danced to the hot rhythm of Sammy Sams. Beyond three opened windows, sunshine lent a wild beauty to a wilderness which had been a pleasure garden. There was no one in the long corridor.

Sample opened the study door and stood aside to allow Storm Kennedy to enter first.

On the threshold of the darkened room, Kennedy stopped.

McGraw sat behind the desk; in a chair placed before it, Miss Elphinstowe; and in a third chair close to the draped french windows he saw Hilary. She was watching him from shadow. He couldn't read her expression.

"Please sit there, Mr. Kennedy."

McGraw indicated a worn leather settee near the door by which he had come in.

Kennedy sat down. Sample shut the door and crossed to his usual place at the chief inspector's elbow. That museum quality which pervaded the room seemed more marked than usual. Kennedy wished he had something to smoke.

"You may perhaps have wondered," McGraw went on, "what had become of these two ladies. Well, I held them incommunicado for a while. Had one of the locked rooms opened for their accommodation."

"Why?"

"That's what I want to know!" Elfie growled.

"Simple," McGraw assured her. "I happen to be aware that Mr. Kennedy is interested in your affairs—yours and Lady Hilary's."

Kennedy darted a glance into the shadows. But Hilary sat motionless. Evidently she had already learned that her identity was known to the chief inspector.

"What of it?" Kennedy challenged.

"I didn't want any more conspiracy," McGraw stated bluntly. "I wanted you present when I interviewed these ladies. I'm looking for facts." He glanced down at the two sheets of paper which lay on the desk. "These statements made before Superintendent Croker are unsatisfactory — apart from a wrong name in one of them."

"That error of judgment I think you understand," Kennedy interrupted.

"I understand it quite well," McGraw replied dryly. "It isn't the only error of judgment. For instance, Madam—" he turned drowsy eyes in Elfie's direction —"you say here that at the approximate time of the murder, you came along the corridor outside, and—I quote your own words—'barged right into her'—meaning Lady Hilary. Does that mean she was running, or you were?"

"Well—I suppose she was speeding somewhat."

"Did she appear to be alarmed?"

"More fed up than alarmed," Elfie answered gruffly. "I had taken a look outside to see how thick the fog was, and met Mr. Kennedy coming in. I went to tell Hilary that he'd gallantly offered to act as pilot and bumped into her, as I said."

McGraw chewed thoughtfully; then his glance explored the shadows which veiled Hilary. The breeze had died away. Velvet drapes no longer swayed to permit darts of sunshine to enter.

"Where were you coming from, Lady Hilary?" he asked.

"Well"—Hilary's quiet voice was perfectly composed—"it's rather difficult to remember, exactly. I had been on the terrace, outside the ladies' room. I suppose I had just come in, but I can't be sure."

"Better refresh your memory, Lady Hilary. Here's your statement." McGraw took up a typed page. "Pass it over, Sergeant Sample."

Sample took the sheet and walked across to Hilary, to whom he handed it, and then returned.

"Switch on the light behind you," McGraw suggested. "See better."

Storm Kennedy was on his feet in a flash. "Let *me* do it!"

But he was too late.

Hilary stood up, stepped to the right hand side of the french windows and touched a switch set in the frame.

Kennedy sat down, fists clenched. His pulse was racing. He couldn't control it. Sample coughed loudly. McGraw closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair.

"You might cross out Query A, Sergeant Sample," he drawled.

Hilary, who had resumed her seat, looked up. Her face was colourless, but her composure remained unruffled. Light from the standard lamp transformed her hair to liquid gold. She smiled at Storm Kennedy.

"Thank you, Bill," she said softly, and turned to McGraw. "If Query A, Inspector, concerns who switched off the light in this room last night—*I did*. . . . Is that what you wanted to know?"

McGraw's eyes opened widely. The expression on that gaunt, aquiline face, as he stared across at Hilary, was indefinable, except that it curiously resembled one of awe. But all he said was: "We're obliged for your co-operation."

"May *I* speak, now, Chief Inspector?" Kennedy asked, urgently.

"I'd rather hear what else Lady Hilary has to tell us."

But, before Hilary or anyone present could speak, there was a ghostly interruption.

An agonized groan came from somewhere beyond the arched opening at the stairhead. Everyone seated in the study stood up. McGraw swung round on Sample.

"Is that bedroom door locked?"

"No, sir. Wilson left the key up there with other exhibits after testing for fingerprints. . . . But one of us has been in here ever since——"

A dull thud . . . sound as of shuffling movements shot an icy chill through Storm Kennedy's veins. His spine tingled.

"There can be no one in that room," he said—and wondered at the unfamiliar timbre of his own voice.

"No one *alive*," Sample agreed.

THE shuffling continued. To it was added, now, a wordless mutter. Storm Kennedy instinctively crossed to Hilary and put his arms about her, as she stood, back to him watching the stairs. He could feel her heart beating hammer-strokes.

Chief Inspector McGraw had got as far as the newel post when an apparition appeared on the stairhead.

It was that of the stabbed man, partly enveloped in the sheet which had covered him! In colour his face resembled dirty chalk; his eyes blazed feverishly. He began to stagger down the stairs.

"*La* . . ." he whispered, and stretched out one bare arm as if pointing—"*It was La*. . . ."

He choked on the unfinished word.

"Geoff!" The name burst, a suppressed shriek, from Hilary's lips. "Oh! merciful God! . . . *Geoff!*"

The sheeted figure stumbled, fell. McGraw caught him, and eased an inert body to the floor. The chief inspector's glance flickered, momentarily, over Hilary, who had collapsed now in Storm Kennedy's arms.

Sergeant Sample ran forward.

"Leave him to me." McGraw's voice was hoarse. "Get a doctor. . . ."

To be continued next week

NOW YOU KNOW

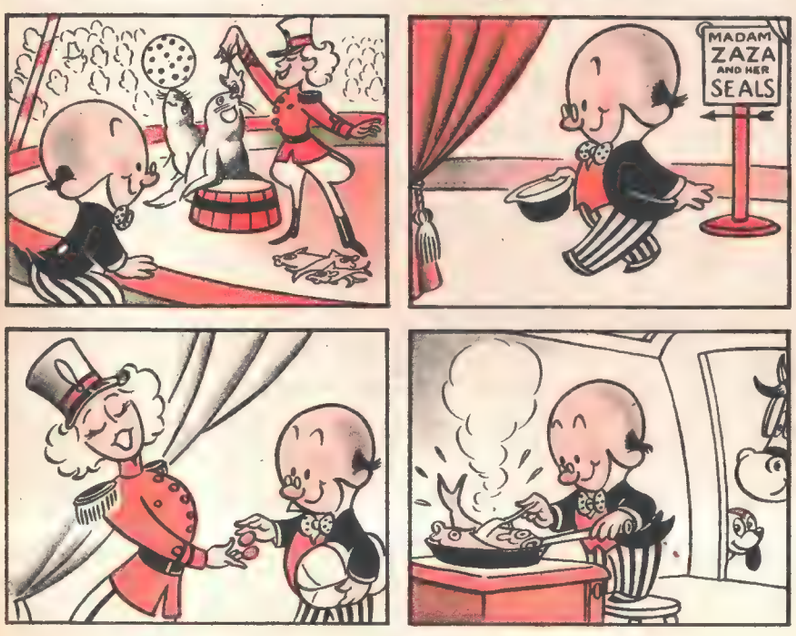
NOWADAYS ONE COUPLE in three marries at a registry office—by certificate or by licence.

Marriage by certificate in England and Wales costs 7s. Seven days' residence in the district is needed before notifying the local registrar. Either of the couple may give the notice. If they live in different districts an extra 2s. is charged, as notice must be given in each district. The certificate is issued after twenty-one days and the couple can then marry any time within three months from the date they gave notice.

Marriage by licence costs 52s. Only one notice is needed and one of the couple must reside fifteen days in the district before giving it. A licence is then issued at the end of one clear day and is valid for three months.

For marriage by special licence—granted only in an emergency—application must be made to the Faculty Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in London. This enables the couple to marry at any time in any place in England and Wales. Cost of special licence: £25.

MR. DIMPLE *by David Hand*



WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of *John Bull's* team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the *John Bull* Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

Why always me?

" It's always the housewife ! Whenever there's difficulty we're told 'economy begins at home !' *We* need electricity as much as anyone with washing, ironing and cooking to do, especially when there are children in the home ! Why should we switch off during the day when shop windows and advertising signs are lit up every night ? "

A fair question ! The answer is that unless we *all* use it *wisely* we will deprive *ourselves* of the electricity so necessary for the work and comfort of our homes. When shop lights and signs are on *we* can switch on too, because they only use it for these purposes — *off* Peak. But if too many people try to use too much electricity during the Peak Hours — supplies must be cut. In our own interest (and the nation's) we must avoid this by using electricity at home — *off* Peak.

THE PEAK — What it means

Power Stations have 'Peak' hours — just as buses and trains have 'rush' hours. They occur when, in addition to the essential needs of industry, the demand for electricity from homes, offices and shops becomes too heavy.

From Monday to Friday the usual Peak Hours are:

8.0 to 9.30 a.m. from October 1st to March 31st

and in addition:

4.0 to 5.30 p.m. from Nov. 1st to January 15th.

During these times *the factories must come first.*

USE electricity-Off Peak!

British Electricity

INSIDE BUCHMAN'S SHANGRI-LA

Continued from page 8

devised for every conceivable eventuality. A Welsh miner is to speak. The choir is ready with the "Rhondda Song." An M.P. has arrived from London. The choir obliges with the "Westminster Song." A Scottish shipyard worker is to testify how Moral Re-Armament has eased family strife. The choir sings the "Clydeside Song."

Immense trouble is taken with musical propaganda. At one assembly I heard the choir render a plaintive Japanese song in honour of delegates from the Far East. Japanese visitors declared that when they closed their eyes they could hardly believe they were not listening to their own countrymen.

All this calculated showmanship, excellent when applied in moderation, can be wearisome when used in large doses. The rousing "Rhondda Song" struck me as a preposterous prelude to a miner's dreary confession of how, before being "changed" by M.R.A., he used to pilfer scraps of wood from the pit.

Little Black Notebooks

"Families Can Be Fun" is another lively song from the choir's seemingly inexhaustible repertoire, but when families whose views betray some divergence are hustled on to the platform to read "confessions" of petty jealousies from little black notebooks, they only become funny.

"Until M.R.A. changed me, I used to be jealous of my sister," is a "confession" I heard repeated with variations. "I thought people took more notice of my sister because she is better looking than I am," is another typical testimony. Such grotesque interpolations lower the standard of the Caux conference in a way which many visitors, there to discuss world problems, obviously found disconcerting.

In spite of these puzzling antics, however, responsible people are now taking Caux very seriously. One recent visitor, the Very Reverend Eugene Fischer, Dean of Strasbourg Cathedral, said:

"At Strasbourg there were eleven countries represented. Here there are seventy-one. At Strasbourg, one met a part of Europe. Here one meets the world. . . . Caux rightly reminds me that there is more than Europe to plan for. There is the whole world."

And Robert Schuman, ex-Prime Minister of France, comments:

"In the economic field we have the Marshall Plan. In the field of security we have the Atlantic Pact. Now we need to give ideological content to the lives of the millions in Europe."

His words were echoed when the bipartisan delegates sent to Caux by the United States House of Representatives returned to make their report to Congress, and Moral Re-Armament was pronounced "a welcome force, which can be used constructively and well."

Other independent observers have been equally forceful.

If Mussolini helped to build that terrace wall at Mountain House, Hitler just as surely contributed to the creation of Moral Re-Armament, for it was in 1938, after the Germans had marched into Austria and the democracies were feverishly rearming, that Dr. Buchman, ever an opportunist, launched a new campaign in East Ham.

Speaking of the hostility piling up between nations, he said: "The remedy may lie in a return to those simple home truths that some of us learned at our mother's knee, and which many of us have forgotten and neglected—honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. . . . We can, we must and we will generate a moral and spiritual force that is powerful enough to remake the world."

His timing was shrewd. Thousands agreed that here was a sane voice in a mad world, even though they could not understand how idealism could overcome tanks and bombs.

Today Dr. Buchman and his followers, infinitely more wealthy and superbly organized, are actively spreading the same gospel. It has penetrated to China, Japan, Burma, Siam, Indonesia, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ceylon, Iceland, Uruguay, New Zealand, Turkey, the Philippines—almost everywhere.

Russia is a notable exception, and it is significant that where Moral Re-Armament was once advocated against the Dictators it is now held up as the answer to Communism.

This note is struck consistently in most of the propaganda now issuing from Caux or the Oxford Group's London headquarters. It underlines many of the speeches delivered during the assemblies. It is sounded repeatedly in the propaganda plays and musicals produced in the theatre at Mountain House.

In the curious blending of politics and religion discernible at Caux, the accent at the moment is decidedly on politics. At a Sunday morning assembly I attended, the sole concession to religion was the singing of a Negro spiritual and the Hallelujah Chorus by the choir.

Nevertheless, followers insist that religion remains the basis of the movement. Early each morning, Dr. Buchman and his acolytes meet for a "quiet time," in which they "listen to God." With pencil and paper handy they jot down the thoughts that come into their minds. In this way, they say, they receive "guidance" by which the day's work at Mountain House is regulated.

This "God-control" has formed the core of Buchman's teachings for thirty years. "Why not a spiritual radiophone in every home?" he asks. "We can listen-in every day."

The Two Admirals

But it must not be thought that all those associated with Moral Re-Armament are starry-eyed idealists tinged with faint religious mania. Among its staunch supporters are many men of action—Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Cochrane, wartime Commodore of Convoys, and America's Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Antarctic explorer, among them.

Caux, with its contrasting manifestations, presents a grave riddle. After forty-eight hours I realized that I was merely on the fringe of its mysteries. I wanted to question some of the men and women who had dedicated their lives to this strange movement. I wanted to find out more about Dr. Buchman and to discover, if possible, by what magic an idea launched casually in an undergraduate's room at Oxford after the first World War had burgeoned into a political power with world-wide implications.

I told Garth Lean, my guide, of the questions I wanted answered. There were people at Caux, he said, who could fill in the gaps. "I'd like to meet some of them," I said.

"You shall meet them all!" he promised.

NEXT ARTICLE: Dr. Buchman and his strange flock

THIS WEEK'S COVER

LIKE other fathers, A. R. Thomson, R.A., finds it difficult to keep his children under control at bus stops. While waiting at Hyde Park Corner, he was so irritated by their acrobatic antics on the shelter rails that he rode home in some dudgeon and forthwith sketched this week's cover picture. The small boy dancing in front is his son Charles. The pigtailed girl inelegantly somersaulting on the right is his daughter Mary.

There's no rushing the K.O. Kid

by STANLEY RUSSELL

With his knock-out punch Dick Langley could have been a box office hit long ago. But he's got the sense to know champions are built up slowly, not made overnight

AT THIS TIME EVERY year boxing promoters start their search for a new British white hope: a man who, besides possessing a highly developed boxing brain, has personality and a punch heavy enough to bring about those spectacular knock-out victories so much in demand by the sporting public.

Every year half a dozen youngsters seem to answer the promoters' prayers. Very rarely, there is one who rockets to fame with a few punches.

But there are approximately 5,000 professional boxers licensed by the Boxing Board of Control. The vast majority of them will never come to anything except a premature old age through being punched on the head too often. A hundred may reach top-line status at a good-class tournament. Barely a couple of dozen have any real and justifiable hope of competing for a championship.

Hope For A Miracle

The upward climb is long, wearying, and occasionally bloody, with one false step liable to wreck the painstaking efforts of months.

It is a prospect that faces every boxer at the start of his career. Most of them hope that in some miraculous way they will find a short cut to the top. Their outlook is coloured by the golden tints of ambition, not the drabber shades of common sense.

One exception is a twenty-one year old middleweight from Peckham, London. His name is Dick Langley. His father is a taxi driver; his mother works in a chocolate factory.

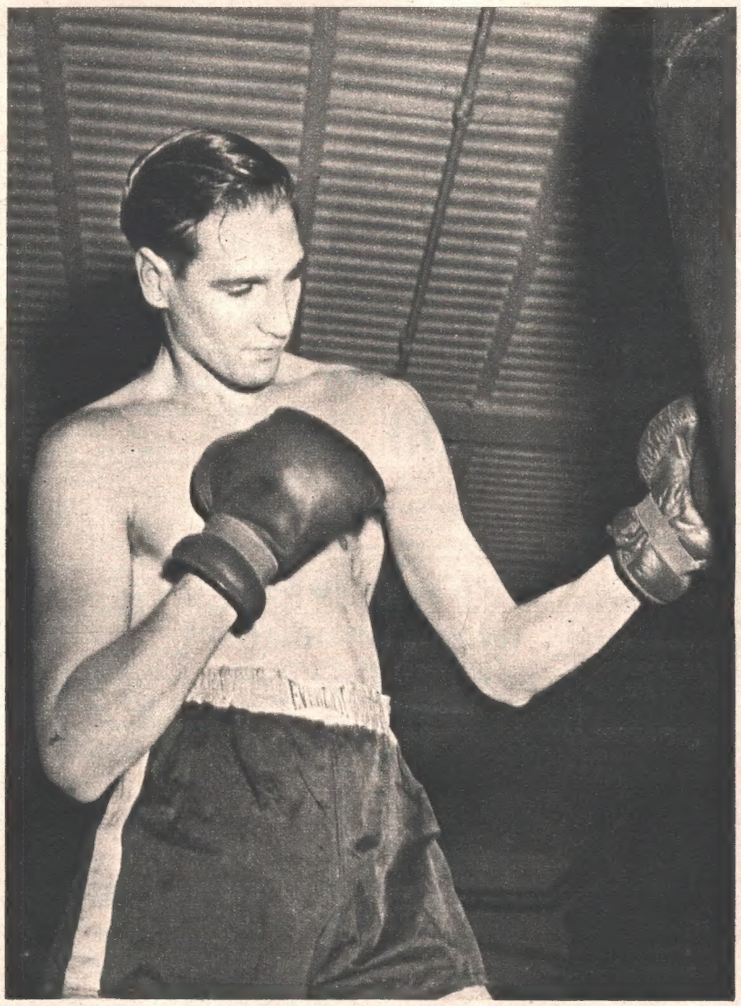
Dick has been a professional boxer for four years. For the first two he was not allowed to box in public, but had to concentrate on training, practice, and building up his physique. He was finally launched in May, 1948. Since then he has had thirty-six contests and won the lot, thirty-one of them by a knock-out or technical knock-out.

It would have been easy to boost him as the K.O. Kid and parade him at the big tournaments. A hundred per cent record and a box office punch: here, surely, is material to bring joy to promoters and public and to be developed against top-class performers.

Champion In Embryo

Langley has everything, or almost everything, a champion needs in his make-up. He has a punch in either hand like the kick of an ox, and, particularly, the classic straight left beloved by the connoisseurs; he has the patience to await a favourable opportunity to knock his man out or make the referee stop the fight; he has the boxing instinct that tells him to switch from hard fighting to scientific boxing and so trap an opponent into a false move.

He has strength, he has stamina; he has both the grace of style and the handsome physique to make him a favourite of men and women spectators alike. Only one thing is missing—experience. It is cheaper, and better, to buy that in the byways.



Dick Langley has strength, style and the classic straight left

When a manager takes on a promising boxer there are two things he can do. One is to push him by making him fight as often as possible, regardless of physical or psychological injury, so long as the money comes in. The other is to bring him along slowly, letting him develop naturally and finding opponents who will be the means of gaining useful experience and exercise as well as reward.

Thirty-six fights in four years is clear enough evidence of the deliberate slowness of Langley's progress, yet since he really started to go he has been kept busy. Most of his fights took place last winter, at approximately weekly intervals.

One boxing writer who asked his manager whether this was not risking too much received this reply: "The lad wants to fight. He needs the experience, and all the time he doesn't get hurt it will do him good. If he ever takes a hiding I shall pull him out until he has recovered."

Though the records will not show it, Langley has been fighting for sixteen years, and it is a long time since he took a hiding. His first known contest was at the age of five, and he lost it. Or rather, he lost several in a row, and always to the same opponent.

Young Langley, awaiting his parents' return home from work, would meet his father at the corner of the street and then run ahead to put the kettle on. One day father arrived early and found his offspring struggling with the seven-year-old bully from the flat downstairs.

"How long has this been going on?" he demanded. "He's always chasing me and hitting me," tearfully replied young Dick.

Instead of making the usual neighbourly complaint to the bully's parents, Langley senior went round that evening to the headquarters of the Lynn Athletic Club, produced his five-year-old son, and told the astonished officials: "I want you to teach him to box."

Cut His Eyes

Thereafter there was peace in the house. Oppressed and oppressor became great friends. Langley remained one of Lynn's stars for a decade and more. Sometimes he lost fights in the amateur ring, but mostly he won. Always there was father to ensure he took no undue risks.

Once a Lynn team travelled to Bristol to meet the local club and had a disastrous night. Four Lynn boys returned home with badly cut eyes; Dick was one of the victims. Father, when he saw the damage, declared: "You'll box no more for six months, and give the cut time to heal."

Eventually, Langley began training at a gymnasium in Islington, near his work as a toolmaker's apprentice, and there met a tubby little man, a boxer's manager named Morrie Fletcher, who urged him to turn professional, declaring him to be "the best thing on two feet." Langley refused.

He had a good job, was interested in boxing only as a sport, and besides, was soon due for R.A.F. service. But wherever Langley was boxing or training, the substantial shadow of Fletcher was only a few yards away.

Lost—But Won Contract

The end of this cat-and-mouse episode came some months later when Langley, by now in the R.A.F., wrote home to say he was fighting for his station, Cosford, against the R.A.F. welterweight champion at Stafford. His father travelled up for the fight, and as he passed the station barrier found Fletcher behind him.

Fletcher had his reward that night. Langley lost his fight and as he left the ring Fletcher whispered to him: "I've got a contract here. Why don't you turn professional? You've nothing to lose.

"I'm not promising you the moon. It will be a long build-up and there will be very little money at first. But I believe in you. After three or four years you will begin to earn something worth while."

Langley signed, shaken by this unexpected sincerity. He soon found his new manager meant what he said. First there was a long course of putting on weight.

"I was seventeen then, six feet one

Make Friday Your Big Day!

HOW would you feel if a telegram boy handed you a wire worth a big cheque and a prize Christmas feast? It was in *Bullets* that reader S. E. Murden (right) recently won £850 and an extra award. Mrs. Harding, like this week's winners of prizes value 5s. or more in Crosswords, will receive a fowl and plum pudding: her outright success brought her £100.

If *you* want a first prize thrill on Friday, make good use of those coupons below and remember, this is your last opportunity to win a bird for your table this Christmas.

ONE LAST WEEK
to join the winners of this year's
1,000 Xmas Birds

£500 "Bullets" 1st PRIZE plus XMAS TURKEY

£50, £25, £20, £15, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6,
5 of £5, 5 of £2 10s. each plus
Xmas Turkey

25 XMAS TURKEYS
100 XMAS FOWLS
2,000 "Good Shot" Awards
XMAS CAKES—See coupon below

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated Dec. 31, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

"I was speechless," said *Bullets* winner S. E. Murden, Byways, Park Avenue, Harrogate. "I made my £850 line in a few seconds."

"I always look forward to a Friday telegram," said £100 Crossword winner Mrs. Harding, 247 Central Drive, Blackpool

XWORD 656 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Drum. 3, Hand. 7, Petals. 9, Barred. 11, Dun. 12, Weekly. 13, Tame. 14, Bet. DOWN: 2, Rook. 4, Dusk. 5, Boast. 6, Deer. 8, Shapes. 10, Sheet. 12, Way.

FOUR £100 SHARERS: Mrs. D. Beard, 34 Kent Road, St. Helens; W. Jacobs, 5 Bispham Drive, Meols, Wirral; Mrs. B. Kane, 2 Rock Villas, 132 Strand Road, Londonderry; Mrs. G. McCaul, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 45 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up. In addition, Winners and 1st Runners-up receive Double Christmas Feasts.

"Bullets" Winners 1,704

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Christmas Turkey: C. Walton, 23 Holme Crescent, Trawden Forest, near Colne: STALIN'S BAND ATOM'S GIVEN "NEW AIR."

SECOND PRIZE, £50 plus Christmas Turkey: J. Jones, 53 Eighth Avenue, Bristol, 7: AS MUCH AS WE NEED—FROM ONE WE *Deny*!

THIRD PRIZE, £25 plus Christmas Turkey: A. Henshaw, 34 Livesey Branch Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn: WITH SKILL AND GRIT —RESET "THIS PRECIOUS STONE—"

OTHER AWARDS: £20: L. E. Jones, 3 Nellington Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells: ALL PARTIES—HAVE "CARROTS"—WHICH, "BEANS"? £15: Mrs. L. Kensett, 249 St. Osyth Road, Clacton-on-Sea: A BOMBSHELL — HIT AMERICA'S "ATOM SHELTER." £10: A. Higgins, "The Tufts," Bream, Glos: WAITING FOR THE WORLD'S—"OPEN CARRIAGE," PRINCESS PEACE. £9: R. Musgrove, 12 Fern Hill, Kendal: A BOMBSHELL—BUT BOB'S YOUR —*Guardian*! £8: J. Rodgers, 41 Fitzwilliam Avenue, Wath, near Rotherham: HIDDEN GOLD—NATURE'S—*Undiscovered* IN "RUSH." £7: A. D. Evans, 33 Osborne Street, Neath: MAN OF THE FUTURE — SUPERMAN, *If* THERE'S MAN! £6: C. H. Simms, 20 Crescent Road, Tilehurst, Reading: IN AUNTIE'S ALBUM—WHAT CURVES! WHAT "RAMROIDS"!

Above 7 winners each also receive Christmas Turkey.

For 5 winners of £5 plus Turkey, and 5 of £2 10s., plus Turkey, see last week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

Winners of 20 further Turkeys and 100 Fowls have been notified and 3,000 "Good Shots" posted.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Old Man 1949	Rift In The Lute
Lost To The World	Never Worries
Torch Of Science	Bolted And Barred
Our Youth	Terribly Important
Standing Idle	Cockahoop
On Austerity's Island	Looks Can Deceive, So
Stalin, The Silent	**Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions**
In Debt	As Good As.....
When The Clouds Roll By	.....The Official
Encouraging	Beneath The.....
Think Of Mother And	After Somebody's.....
A Fairy-tale	Seems A Bit.....
One Of Those Things	Gave.....An Idea
Going Round	

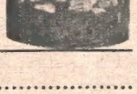
GIANT XMAS OFFER COMING NEXT WEEK!
For details of the New Year Prize Offers appearing in *Bulletin* dated Dec. 17—apply on coupon below

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY "Bullets" 1,709 (or Xword 661) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

EXAMPLE ..... 6d.
BULLET
EX. ..... 6d.
B.
EX. ..... 6d.
B.
EX. ..... 6d.
B.

XMAS CAKE BONUSES A delicious Xmas Cake accompanies each of the 145 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.



Closing Postmark, **1,709** MON., Dec. 5

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value .....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

APPLY on this COUPON for "BULLETS" and CROSSWORD GUIDE
With this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) send P.O. 1s. for eight weeks' *Bulletin* and *Gazette* at REDUCED SERIES RATE. If requiring Specimen copy only, affix 2½d. stamp below.

P.O. 1s. No. .....

For SPECIMEN copy of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* (dated Dec. 17) **STICK 2½d. STAMP HERE**

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

522

FINAL FOWLS and PUDDINGS for XWORDS

£100 1st PRIZE CASH plus XMAS FOWL and PUDDING
for £100 Winner or each sharer

Awards value £25 amongst 1st Runners-up
AND UP TO
100 XMAS FOWLS and 100 XMAS PUDDINGS
(Fowl and Pudding with every 1st Runners-up Award value 5s. or over.)
"Signpost" Prizes for 2nd Runners-up.

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

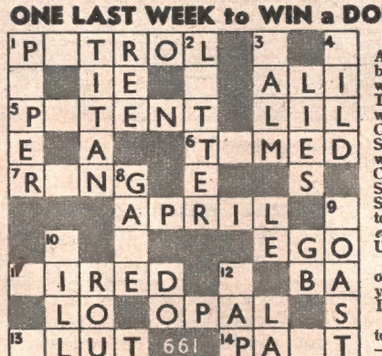
Across Clues **XWORD 661**

1. Army column's movements may be largely guided by
5. Average man doesn't worry a great deal about a threat to peace that is not this
6. Most circus animals have to be this before being allowed to perform
7. One has sometimes meant a step up the ladder
11. It's natural for worker to feel anxious when he is
13. Things lying all over the place may be rightly blamed on
14. Enmity is sometimes buried in

Down Clues

1. It's natural for one to be puffed
2. To leave it about is unwise
3. Can be found in some gardens, if you know where to look
4. Such a winter makes some people rather apprehensive
8. The greater its speed, the likelier it is that accidents will happen
9. Man wanted by police is apt to be caught more easily if he makes this
10. Top of this isn't reached without toil and sweat
12. A player is all the better for

ONE LAST WEEK to WIN a DOUBLE XMAS PRIZE



In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps, covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated December 17.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

I enclose P.O. value.....

No. .....

661 Closing Postmark MON., DEC. 5

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

Passed The Crisis

JOHN BULL November 26 1949

THERE'S NO RUSHING THE K.O. KID

Continued from previous page

inch, and weighed ten and a half stone," he recalls. "Turn me sideways and an opponent couldn't see me." In four years he has still added only ten pounds, but if opponents have had the chance to appreciate the broader view they have not, as a rule, been in a position to say so.

The trail of dazed and battered victims could so easily have been a temptation to leave the path mapped out and to try the short cut to the top. But even if Langley had wanted to, there was the persistence of his manager, backed by the advice of his trainer, Danny Vary, and his father.

Their efforts have one joint aim: to make Langley a champion *at their time*. Not even personal considerations will budge them from their purpose. Once Mrs. Fletcher fell seriously ill. By arranging extra fights for Langley, enough managerial commission would have been earned to meet the heavy medical bills, but Fletcher refused to be tempted.

Only one thing has upset their schedule: a Board of Control ruling that, because of his successes, Langley must henceforth sign for a minimum of eight rounds. If Langley and Co. had their way he would still be fighting six-round contests.

"You learn more that way," explains Dick. "There are plenty of experienced men who have slipped back a little from the eight-round status but who can still put up a good fight and teach a youngster a lot."

"Morrie and Dan left me to decide how I should fight, and told me between rounds whether I was leading on points or not."

He won, and last month made his big-show début at Earls Court, where he triumphed again.

At last he has climbed out of the shadows of obscurity. Now the road is wide open. For his first fight he was paid £5; recently he drew £150 for his few minutes' work.

Will he ever be British champion? He is obviously not yet ready to meet the established stars, but he is going the right way to qualify. The Four Year Plan has borne fruit.

"This boy's a world-beater," declared Fletcher, after one of his early victories. "Langley's nothing," countered a rival manager.

Somewhere between the two extremes lies the key to the British title. And Dick Langley is undeniably getting closer to it every time he fights.

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